

Old Dominion Freight (ODFL)

\$195.64 (As of 09/11/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$207.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 03/12/19)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:A

Value: D

Growth: A

Momentum: A

Summary

Old Dominion's efforts to add shareholder value is impressive. During 2019, the company rewarded shareholders to the tune of \$295.5 million. In first-half 2020, it bought back shares worth \$306.8 million and paid dividends of \$35.9 million. Its debt-control efforts are also appreciative. Inclusion of Old Dominion in the coveted S&P 500 index last year is an added positive. Backed by these tailwinds, shares of Old Dominion outperformed its industry in a year's time. However, decline in LTL tonnage due to soft freight demand is hurting the top line. Notably, demand for the company's services started dwindling from the latter half of March due to coronavirus concerns. Due to the supply chain disruptions LTL tons per day declined 8.1% in first-half 2020. With the health peril still present, third-quarter results may be dented too.

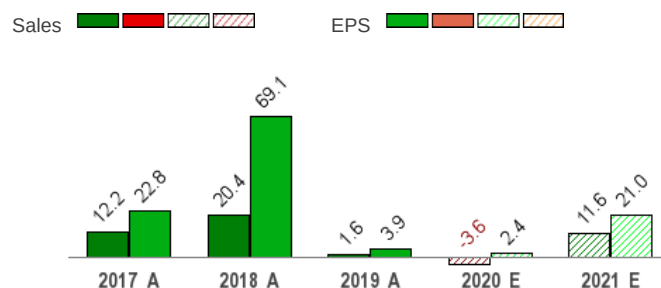
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$227.21 - \$119.01
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	700,317
Market Cap	\$23.0 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	54.6%
Beta	1.04
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.60 / 0.3%
Industry	Transportation - Truck
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 12% (30 out of 251)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	21.4%
Last Sales Surprise	0.1%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	4.3%
Expected Report Date	10/22/2020
Earnings ESP	1.5%
P/E TTM	31.5
P/E F1	37.4
PEG F1	5.0
P/S TTM	5.8

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	1,024 E	1,112 E	1,120 E	1,092 E	4,421 E
2020	987 A	896 A	1,027 E	1,021 E	3,961 E
2019	991 A	1,061 A	1,048 A	1,009 A	4,109 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	\$1.28 E	\$1.60 E	\$1.66 E	\$1.45 E	\$6.33 E
2020	\$1.11 A	\$1.25 A	\$1.46 E	\$1.35 E	\$5.23 E
2019	\$1.09 A	\$1.44 A	\$1.37 A	\$1.20 A	\$5.11 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 09/11/2020. The reports text is as of 09/14/2020.

Overview

Old Dominion Freight Line, founded in 1934, is a leading LTL (Less-Than-Truckload) company. The company based in Thomasville, NC, offers LTL services on a regional, inter-regional and national basis. The services are inclusive of ground and air expedited transportation, apart from consumer household pickup and delivery through a single integrated organization.

The company also offers LTL services across North America through strategic alliances. Additionally, it provides value-added services like container drayage, truckload brokerage, supply chain consulting and warehousing. The company operates multiple service and maintenance centers.

While bulk of the centers is owned by the company, the remaining are leased. The service centers are endowed with responsibility pertaining to the pickup and delivery of freight locally. Moreover, the maintenance centers are responsible for performing operations that are related to the routine and preventive maintenance as well as repairs of the company's equipment.

Old Dominion's infrastructure allows for smoother freight transportation offering next-day and second-day service through each of its regions across the United States. Over the past several years, the company has opened numerous service centers which have increased capacity across its service network. This in turn places the company for future growth prospects.

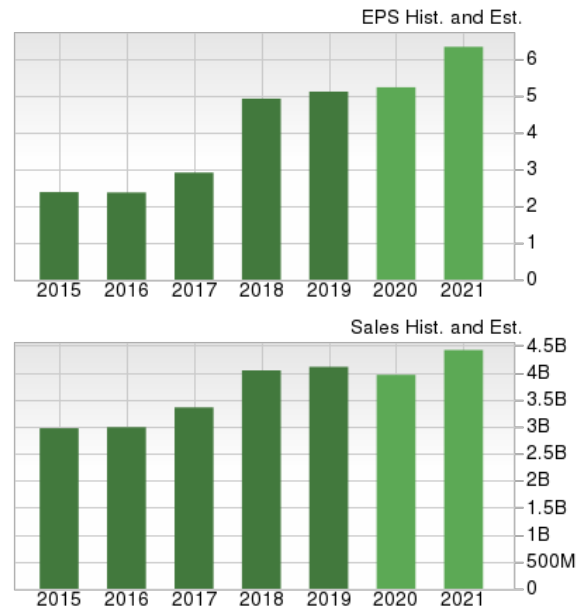
The company constantly works towards improving customer service by increasing on-time performance and reducing cargo claims. It primarily focuses on increasing shipments and tonnage growth in order to generate higher revenues.

The company faces primary competition from regional, inter-regional and national LTL carriers. It also faces secondary competition from truckload carriers, small package carriers, airfreight carriers and railroads.

In 2019, total revenues increased 1.6% year over year to \$4.1 billion. LTL service revenues were up 1.6% and accounted for bulk of the top line (98.7%). Remainder of the top line (1.5%) was generated from non-LTL revenues.

Notably, LTL tons declined 4.4% year over year as LTL shipments fell 2.2% from 2018 levels. However, LTL weight per shipment, excluding fuel surcharges, increased 7.3% in 2019.

Moreover, the company's fiscal year coincides with the calendar year.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ Old Dominion's efforts to reward shareholders through dividends and share buybacks are impressive. During 2019, the company rewarded shareholders to the tune of \$295.5 million. In first-half 2020, it bought back shares worth \$306.8 million and paid dividends of \$35.9 million. In July, the company's board of directors declared a quarterly cash dividend of 15 cents per share. The amount will be paid on Sep 16, 2020, to shareholders of record at the close of business on Sep 2. After giving effect to the three-for-two stock split, announced in March 2020, this dividend represents a 32.4% increase over the dividend paid in Sep 2019.
- ▲ Old Dominion's efforts to reduce its debt levels are quite encouraging. The company's total debt was around \$250 million in 2008. This has been lowered to \$78.4 million at the end of second-quarter 2020. Old Dominion's total debt to total capital ratio at the end of second-quarter 2020 was pegged at 0.05. The reading compares favorably with the figure of 0.13 for its industry. Additionally, the company's cash and cash equivalents at the end of the second quarter stood at \$518.7 million, way above the current maturities of long-term debt figure of \$45 million, implying that the company has sufficient cash to meet its current debt obligations.
- ▲ Improvement in operating ratio (operating expenses as a percentage of revenues) in the first half of 2020 is encouraging. The metric improved to 81.4% in the first quarter from 82% in the year-ago quarter due to lower operating expenses. Even in the June quarter, operating ratio improved 10 basis points to 77.8% despite the revenue deterioration. Notably, at the end of first half of 2020, the metric stood at 79.7%, compared with 79.9% at the end of the first six months of 2019. Notably, lower the value of this metric the better. The inclusion of Old Dominion in the coveted S&P 500 index from Dec 9, 2019, is an added positive.

Old Dominion's efforts to reduce its debt levels are quite encouraging.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ The sluggish freight environment is a major concern for Old Dominion. As an evidence, LTL tonnage declined 4.4% in 2019 from 2018 levels. The adversity is due to lower volumes on account of soft freight demand. LTL shipments slipped 2.2% in 2019. In first-half 2020, LTL shipments slipped 10.3% and LTL tonnage declined 7.3%. If the sub-par performance persists, the stock might be affected significantly.
- ▼ Demand for the company's services dwindled in the latter half of March as the coronavirus pandemic crippled the domestic economy. Consequently, effect of coronavirus on second-quarter results was more severe than the first. In the June quarter, the bottom line declined 13.2% and the top line plunged 15.5%. The year-over-year underperformance was due to a 12.1% decrease in LTL tons per day and a 3.8% reduction in LTL revenue per hundredweight as a result of a soft freight environment. With the health peril still very much present, the company's third-quarter results may be adversely impacted too.
- ▼ The truck industry, of which Old Dominion is an integral part, has been persistently battling driver shortage for several years. As old drivers are retiring, trucking companies are finding it difficult to hire new drivers since the job mostly does not appeal to the younger generation. According to an estimate given by Costello, the United States will face a crisis of 100,000 drivers in five years and a further crunch of 160,000 drivers by 2028. The projection does not bode well for Old Dominion.

Reduced demand for the company's services due to the coronavirus pandemic is a major setback.

Last Earnings Report

Earnings Beat at Old Dominion in Q2

Old Dominion Freight Line's earnings per share of \$1.25 outpaced the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 22 cents. However, the bottom line contracted 13.2% year over year, mainly due to coronavirus-induced 15.5% year-over-year decline in total revenues to \$896.2 million.

The top line, however, surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$894.9 million. The year-over-year revenue underperformance was due to a 12.1% decrease in LTL (Less-Than-Truckload) tons per day and a 3.8% reduction in LTL revenue per hundredweight as a result of a soft freight environment.

Other Details

In the quarter under review, Old Dominion reported a 12.1% drop in LTL tons. Moreover, LTL revenue per hundredweight excluding fuel surcharges dipped 0.5%. LTL weight per shipment rose 5.3%. However, LTL shipments were down 16.6%.

The company's major revenue generating segment, LTL services, logged a total of \$884.1 million, down 15.6% year over year. Revenues from other services fell 9.8% to \$12.1 million. Total operating expenses decreased 15.7% to \$697 million, mainly owing to the 13.5% reduction in costs pertaining to salaries, wages & benefits.

Despite the revenue deterioration, the operating ratio (operating expenses as a percentage of revenues) improved 10 basis points to 77.8%. Old Dominion exited the quarter with cash and cash equivalents worth \$518.6 million compared with \$403.57 million at the end of 2019. Capital expenditures incurred in the reported quarter were \$67.9 million. Old Dominion expects a capex of \$265 million for 2020. Of the total, \$195 million is anticipated to be invested in real estate and service-center expansion. The company expects to spend \$20 million and \$50 million on tractors/trailers, and technology and other assets, respectively.

During the second quarter, Old Dominion rewarded its shareholders with \$146.1 million through buybacks (\$128.5 million) and dividends (\$17.6 million).

Quarter Ending	06/2020
Report Date	Jul 30, 2020
Sales Surprise	0.14%
EPS Surprise	21.36%
Quarterly EPS	1.25
Annual EPS (TTM)	4.93

Recent News

Update on LTL Segment — Sep 3, 2020

Old Dominion issued an update on the performance of its less-than-truckload (LTL) segment, the major revenue driver. LTL tons per day increased 2.4% year over year in August owing to 5.9% increase in LTL weight per shipment. Consequently, revenue per day inched up 1.3% in the month. However, LTL revenue per hundredweight registered a decline.

Expands Service Center Network — Aug 3, 2020

Old Dominion expands its network by adding nine service centers in new and existing markets during the first half of 2020, bringing the total nationwide service center count to 238.

Dividend Update — Jul 23, 2020

The company's board of directors declared a quarterly cash dividend of 15 cents per share. The amount will be paid on Sep 16, 2020, to shareholders of record at the close of business on Sep 2. After giving effect to the three-for-two stock split, announced in March 2020, this dividend represents a 32.4% increase over the dividend paid in Sep 2019.

Valuation

Old Dominion shares are up 54.6% and 68.4% in the year-to-date period and over the trailing 12-month period respectively. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are up 27.6% and those in the Zacks Transportation sector have gained 1.4%. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and the sector are up 31.3% and 3.8%, respectively.

The S&P 500 Index is up 3.8% in the year-to-date period and 12% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 32.59X forward 12-month price-to-earnings, which compares to 24.33X for the Zacks sub-industry, 27.81X for the Zacks sector and 22.15X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 36.22X and as low as 12.85X, with a 5-year median of 20.88X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$207 price target reflects 34.5X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for ODFL

Valuation Multiples - ODFL					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	32.59	24.33	27.81	22.15
	5-Year High	36.22	26.44	32.35	23.44
	5-Year Low	12.85	13.24	10.49	15.26
	5-Year Median	20.88	18.17	13.51	17.63
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	21.68	11.93	9.89	14.45
	5-Year High	22.63	21.94	11.07	15.6
	5-Year Low	6.63	5.8	5.16	9.51
	5-Year Median	11.52	8.66	7.23	13
P/S F12M	Current	5.36	2.01	1.38	4.08
	5-Year High	5.72	2.09	1.41	4.29
	5-Year Low	1.35	0.83	0.85	3.11
	5-Year Median	2.62	1.3	1.2	3.66

As of 09/11/2020

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 12% (30 out of 251)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
ArcBest Corporation (ARCB)	Outperform	1
KnightSwift Transportation Holdings Inc. (KNX)	Outperform	1
Landstar System, Inc. (LSTR)	Outperform	1
Saia, Inc. (SAIA)	Outperform	2
Werner Enterprises, Inc. (WERN)	Outperform	2
Universal Logistics Holdings, Inc. (ULH)	Neutral	2
YRC Worldwide, Inc. (YRCW)	Neutral	3
Roadrunner Transportation Systems, Inc (RTS)	NA	NA

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Transportation - Truck				Industry Peers		
	ODFL	X Industry	S&P 500	JBHT	SAIA	YRCW
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Outperform	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	2	3
VGM Score	A	-	-	A	A	A
Market Cap	22.95 B	1.15 B	23.09 B	14.26 B	3.45 B	220.06 M
# of Analysts	9	4	14	10	9	1
Dividend Yield	0.31%	0.00%	1.65%	0.80%	0.00%	0.00%
Value Score	D	-	-	B	B	A
Cash/Price	0.02	0.05	0.07	0.02	0.01	1.44
EV/EBITDA	20.91	6.82	13.07	12.38	13.08	3.05
PEG F1	5.02	2.28	2.93	1.90	2.33	NA
P/B	7.74	2.38	3.19	5.96	3.94	NA
P/CF	26.95	8.39	12.63	13.97	14.82	0.63
P/E F1	37.28	24.51	21.25	28.52	29.46	NA
P/S TTM	5.82	1.18	2.44	1.54	1.94	0.05
Earnings Yield	2.67%	3.51%	4.52%	3.51%	3.39%	-22.52%
Debt/Equity	0.03	0.16	0.70	0.55	0.16	-2.32
Cash Flow (\$/share)	7.26	4.97	6.93	9.67	8.91	6.61
Growth Score	A	-	-	A	B	A
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	24.61%	13.09%	10.41%	10.97%	24.33%	-48.81%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	2.39%	-15.81%	-4.75%	-3.13%	5.91%	70.29%
Current Cash Flow Growth	3.97%	-0.06%	5.26%	-2.99%	11.52%	46.76%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	15.99%	8.82%	8.49%	9.02%	15.99%	13.96%
Current Ratio	1.96	1.68	1.35	1.59	1.09	1.07
Debt/Capital	3.24%	16.66%	42.95%	35.35%	13.89%	NA
Net Margin	14.95%	4.23%	10.25%	5.65%	6.25%	-1.40%
Return on Equity	19.66%	10.09%	14.59%	22.88%	13.12%	NA
Sales/Assets	0.99	1.33	0.50	1.70	1.19	2.43
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-3.61%	-3.61%	-1.42%	-0.02%	0.31%	-9.68%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	A	A	B
Daily Price Change	0.55%	-0.65%	0.39%	-0.65%	0.08%	-2.82%
1-Week Price Change	-2.03%	-1.00%	-1.28%	-3.62%	-2.15%	-4.15%
4-Week Price Change	1.63%	0.00%	-1.42%	-1.16%	0.95%	-4.40%
12-Week Price Change	18.80%	16.02%	4.86%	13.26%	19.08%	133.33%
52-Week Price Change	68.94%	-0.56%	-1.17%	18.01%	41.09%	-8.02%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	700,317	148,297	1,834,261	624,834	148,297	1,774,678
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	2.38%	0.00%	0.00%	0.38%	1.18%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	4.33%	0.08%	0.00%	2.22%	1.69%	NA
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	13.04%	20.96%	4.05%	10.89%	13.17%	41.94%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	7.38%	0.00%	0.00%	1.05%	2.85%	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	D
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.

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Returns quoted represent past performance which is no guarantee of future results. Investment returns and principal value will fluctuate so that when shares are redeemed, they may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance may be higher or lower than the performance shown.

Investing involves risk; principal loss is possible. There is no guarantee that companies that can issue dividends will declare, continue to pay or increase dividends.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

52-Week High-Low: The range of the highest and lowest prices at which a stock has traded during the past year. This range is determined based on the stock's daily closing price which may differ from the intra-day high or low. Many investors use it as a technical indicator to determine a stock's current value and future price movement. The idea here is that if price breaks out from the 52-week range, in either direction, the momentum may continue in the same direction.

20-Day Average Volume (Shares): The average number of shares of a company traded in a day over the last 20 days. It is a direct indication of a security's overall liquidity. The higher the average daily trading volume, the easier it is to enter or exit the stock at a desired price with more buyers and sellers being available.

Daily Price Change: This is the percentage difference between a trading day's closing price and the prior trading day's closing price. This item is updated at 9 p.m. EST each day.

1-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 5 trading days. This change reflects the collective buying and selling sentiment over the 1-week period.

A strong weekly price increase for the stock, especially when accompanied by increased volume, is an indication of it gaining momentum.

4-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 20 trading days or past 4 weeks. This is a medium-term 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 most recent 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 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.