

Palo Alto Networks (PANW)

\$269.48 (As of 08/19/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$283.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 02/24/20)

Prior Recommendation: Underperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:D

Value: D

Growth: C

Momentum: C

Summary

Palo Alto's fiscal third-quarter results reflect several deal wins and increasing adoption of the company's next-generation security platforms, attributable to the rise in remote work environment and need for stronger security. Growing traction in Prisma and Cortex offerings also acted as a tailwind. Palo Alto also continued to acquire new customers and increase wallet share with existing customers. Increase in revenues from each geographical segment were tailwinds. However, revenues were affected by the negative impact of sales incentives related to Next-Generation Security products. Moreover, high acquisition related expenses are denting the margins. Moreover, competition from the likes of Fortinet and Cisco are perpetual woes. Shares of the company have underperformed the industry year to date.

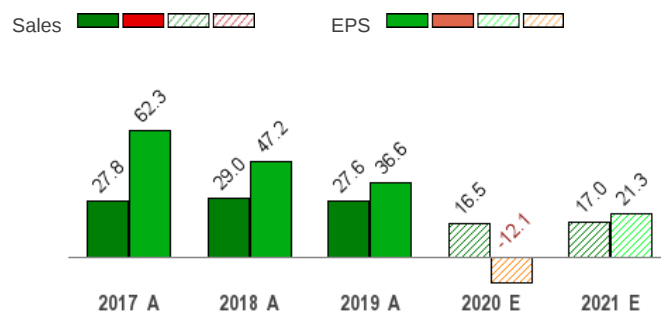
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52 Week High-Low	\$272.71 - \$125.47
20 Day Average Volume (sh)	686,227
Market Cap	\$26.9 B
YTD Price Change	16.5%
Beta	1.21
Dividend / Div Yld	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Security
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 49% (128 out of 252)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	28.6%
Last Sales Surprise	4.8%
EPS F1 Est- 4 week change	0.0%
Expected Report Date	08/24/2020
Earnings ESP	0.2%
P/E TTM	55.2
P/E F1	46.4
PEG F1	2.0
P/S TTM	8.2

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	894 E	948 E	1,009 E	1,086 E	3,954 E
2020	772 A	817 A	869 A	921 E	3,379 E
2019	656 A	711 A	727 A	806 A	2,900 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	\$1.21 E	\$1.41 E	\$1.46 E	\$1.73 E	\$5.81 E
2020	\$1.05 A	\$1.19 A	\$1.17 A	\$1.39 E	\$4.79 E
2019	\$1.17 A	\$1.51 A	\$1.31 A	\$1.47 A	\$5.45 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 08/19/2020. The reports text is as of 08/20/2020.

Overview

Santa Clara, CA-based Palo Alto Networks, Inc. offers network security solutions to enterprises, service providers and government entities worldwide.

The company's next generation firewall products deliver natively integrated application, user, and content visibility and control through its operating system, hardware and software architecture. It serves the enterprise network security market, which includes Firewall, Unified Threat Management (UTM), Web Gateway, Intrusion Detection and Prevention, and Virtual Private Network technologies.

Through its products and subscription services, Palo Alto provides integrated protection against dynamic security threats while simplifying the IT security infrastructure. Its solutions incorporate application-specific integrated circuits, hardware architecture, operating system, and associated security and networking functions.

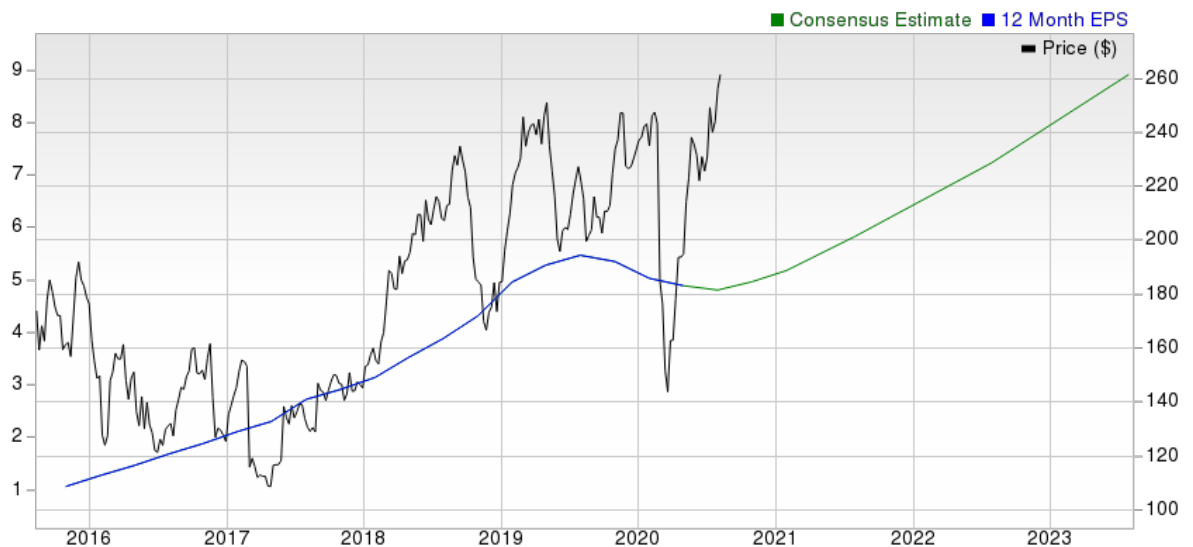
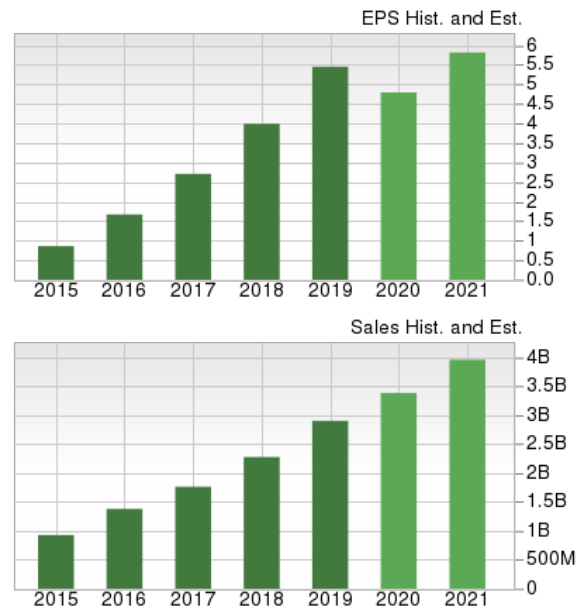
The company's network security gateways protect customer data, reduce security complexities and lower total cost of ownership. Customers can implement their security policies on traffic between internal networks and the Internet, as well as between internal and private networks shared with partners.

The company has a single operating segment. However, the company announces its revenues from products and services separately. For fiscal 2019, the company reported total revenues of \$2.9 billion, which grew 28% year over year.

Palo Alto's fiscal 2019 revenues from its products rose 25% year over year to \$1,096.2 million. Revenues from subscriptions and support increased 29% to \$1,803.4 million.

Further, Palo Alto operates across different geographic regions, including the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) and the Asia-Pacific and Japan (APAC).

The company faces competition from large companies like Cisco and Juniper, independent security vendors such as Symantec, Check Point, Fortinet, FireEye and several other small companies.



Reasons To Buy:

▲ Cyber security has become a mission-critical, high-profile requirement as financial well being, brands and reputation of enterprises are exposed to sophisticated cyber threats. Palo Alto is growing rapidly in this space on the back of its innovative next-generation security platforms. The company's security platforms have innovative traffic classification engine that helps it in identifying network traffic by application, user and content. As a result, organizations have in-depth visibility into all traffic and applications which help them to control usage, content, risks and cyber threats at the user level. Therefore, Palo Alto's security platforms simplify security infrastructure for organizations by eliminating the need for multiple, stand-alone security appliances and software products. This reduces the total cost of ownership thereby giving the organization a competitive edge.

Product ramp ups, deal wins, continuous growth of the network security market and expected benefits from the ongoing investments are the positives.

▲ Palo Alto has made strategic acquisitions to boost growth. The buyout of LightCyber expanded the company's Next-Generation Security Platform. Over the last few years, it also completed several important acquisitions to broaden its portfolio and global reach. Buyouts of Morta Security and Cyvera expanded its product portfolio and the customer base. Another acquired company, CirroSecure's resources and expertise has helped Palo Alto in boosting the functionality of its enterprise security platform and guard the SaaS collaboration products of Salesforce.com, Google Drive, Box and Dropbox better. Moreover, the company expanded its endpoint detection and response (EDR) capabilities with the acquisition of Secdo. Moreover, the RedLock buyout extended its leadership in cloud security. Its buyout of Demisto is helping Palo Alto incorporate AI and ML to enhance the automation of its customers' security operations. Container security company Twistlock, and serverless security firm PureSec, are expected to help Palo Alto better protect customers' journey to the cloud. Its impending acquisition of machine identity-based micro-segmentation company Aporeto will bring micro-segmentation capabilities in Prisma Cloud, further fortifying it.

▲ Palo Alto has made strategic partnerships to expedite growth. The company formed the NextWave Technology Partner Program under which an organization can join as strategic or integration partner. Over the last one year, it has expanded its strategic partnership with VMware to address cloud and mobile security needs of organizations. Apart from this, Palo Alto has made strategic alliance with Aruba Networks to offer security solutions tailored for mobile users. Furthermore, with another partnership with Splunk, Palo Alto is offering solutions to effectively coordinate detection, incident investigation, and response for advanced threats. Moreover, by integrating its solutions with Citrix, the company offers security solutions to cloud networking platforms. These strategic partnerships bring in customers for Palo Alto thereby boosting the top line.

▲ The exponential growth in the amount of data, complexity of data formats and the need to scale resources at regular intervals has led to a tremendous surge in demand for cloud computing software and applications. This trend, on the other hand, has made it necessary for companies to enforce stricter data security measures. Therefore, looking at the industry's trends, Palo Alto is currently focusing on cloud-based protection services. The company currently offers a subscription-based cloud protection service — WildFire — which helps end-customers in identifying malware on any network and takes preventive measures automatically. Moreover, Palo Alto has launched several new subscription-based services in the last few months – AutoFocus, Aperture, GlobalProtect cloud service and Logging Service – which have expanded its cloud protection capabilities.

▲ Palo Alto is currently focusing on selling more subscription-based services. This unique business model is helping it to generate stable revenues while expanding margins. Subscription-based service is a high gross-margin business (approximately 80%) compared with the hardware-centric model. We believe that the strategy will continue to improve the company's top line and bottom line. Palo Alto has been witnessing tremendous customer growth for its subscription-based services like WildFire and Trap. Further, the company's subscription-based services – AutoFocus, Aperture, Traps and Virtual continue to witness solid growth. We believe that continued focus on subscription-based products and services and product upgrades will boost the company's top line.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ We note that Palo Alto currently has a trailing 12-month Price/Book Value (P/B) ratio of 13.2. This level compares unfavorably with what the industry witnessed in the last year. Hence, valuation looks slightly stretched from a P/B perspective.
- ▼ Near-term prospects for Palo Alto are not promising as customer changing behavior has recently hit several other players in this space. For the past few months, various competitors in the cyber security space noticed that the companies have been breaking their cybersecurity investment plans into phases and implementing the same over longer periods of time, instead of making a single large investment. This makes us slightly cautious about the company's near-term performance.
- ▼ Palo Alto faces stiff competition from several big and small players in the security application market. Further, over the past few years, the demand for IT security has been on the rise driven by increasing awareness and cyber attacks, making the market more attractive for new players. Also, there are some established players in the adjacent markets like Cisco and Juniper that can cross sell security products and include security into their existing product lines, further intensifying competition in the space. Therefore, companies must deliver prompt and advanced technologies to suit customer requirements and expedite product launch to stay afloat.
- ▼ To survive in the highly competitive cyber security market, each player must continually invest in broadening its capabilities. Over the past few years, Palo Alto has invested heavily to enhance its sales and marketing capabilities, particularly by increasing the sales force. This has negatively impacted its operating margins. Furthermore, though the company foresees these investments to garner benefit over the long run, we note that there is uncertainty about the payback period.

Intensifying competition, an uncertain economic environment and currency headwinds remain concerns.

Last Earnings Report

Palo Alto Q3 Earnings and Revenues Beat Estimates

Palo Alto Networks reported third-quarter fiscal 2020 non-GAAP earnings of \$1.17 per share, which surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 28.6%. However, the bottom line declined 10.7% year over year.

The company's revenues of \$869.4 million improved 20% year over year. Moreover, the figure beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$829 million.

The top line was primarily driven by several deal wins and increasing adoption of the company's next-generation security platforms, attributable to the rise in remote work environment and need for stronger security. Growing traction in Prisma and Cortex offerings also acted as a tailwind.

However, revenues were affected by the negative impact of sales incentives related to Next-Generation Security products, which continued from the prior fiscal year.

Quarterly Details

Product revenues grew approximately 1% to \$280.9 million.

The company's subscription and support revenues improved 31% to \$588.5 million, driven by a 37% increase in SaaS-based subscription revenues and 24% rise in support revenues. This segment of Palo Alto's business constituted 68% of total revenues in the fiscal third quarter.

Further, billings improved 24% year over year to \$1.02 billion. Deferred revenues rose 28% to \$3.4 billion.

During the reported quarter, Palo Alto continued to acquire new customers — adding more than 2,500 customers— and increase wallet share with existing customers.

Region wise, revenues from the Americas climbed 19% while Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and Asia Pacific revenues rose 24% and 15%, respectively.

Margins

Additionally, Palo Alto's gross margin contracted 130 basis points (bps) on a year-over-year basis to 75.2%.

Non-GAAP operating margin contracted 450 bps to 16.4% due to a headwind of about \$3 million in net expenses related to the recent acquisition.

Balance Sheet

Palo Alto exited the fiscal third quarter with cash, cash equivalents and short-term investments of approximately \$2.2 billion compared with \$3.5 billion at the end of the preceding quarter.

The company's balance sheet does not have any long-term debt.

It generated cash flow from operations of \$169.9 million compared with \$306.9 million in the previous quarter. Free cash flow came in at \$83.6 million.

Guidance

For fourth-quarter fiscal 2020, Palo Alto anticipates revenue growth of 14-15% year over year between \$915 million and \$925 million. Billings growth is anticipated between 13% and 14%, (\$1.19 billion-\$1.21 billion).

Non-GAAP earnings per share are estimated in the range of \$1.37-\$1.40, taking into account approximately \$8 million of net expenses related to the acquisition of CloudGenix.

For fiscal 2020, the company estimates billings to grow approximately 18% year over year.

Revenues for the fiscal year are estimated between \$3.37 billion and \$3.38 billion, suggesting an improvement of 16-17% year over year.

Non-GAAP earnings per share are estimated in the band of \$4.78-\$4.81.

Quarter Ending 04/2020

Report Date	May 21, 2020
Sales Surprise	4.84%
EPS Surprise	28.57%
Quarterly EPS	1.17
Annual EPS (TTM)	4.88

Recent News

On June 17, Palo Alto introduced ML-Powered Next-Generation Firewall, to identify and eliminate threats and secure IoT devices.

On Apr 22, Palo Alto completed the acquisition of software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) provider — CloudGenix — for approximately \$420 million.

On Feb 24, Palo Alto launched Cortex XSOAR, an extended security orchestration, automation and response platform to provide security leaders with improved capabilities against threats across their entire enterprise.

On Jan 6, Palo Alto announced that the Prisma Cloud has been deemed "In Process" for the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP). Moreover, it has been added to Palo Alto Networks Government Cloud Services.

On Dec 23, 2019, Palo Alto completed the buyout of machine identity-based micro segmentation company, Aporeto, in order to reinforce its cloud native security platform delivered by Prisma Cloud.

Valuation

Shares of Palo Alto have increased 16.5% in the year so far and up 32.3% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry have increased 12.7% while the Zacks Computer & Technology sector increased 22.1%, year-to-date (YTD). Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and the sector have gained 24.5% and 36.3%, respectively.

The S&P 500 Index has gained 5.2% YTD and 16.2% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 6.73X forward 12-month sales, which compares to 7.77X for the Zacks sub-industry, 4.12X for the Zacks sector and 3.72X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 11.98X and as low as 3.51X, with a 5-year median of 6.31X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$283 price target reflects 7.07X forward 12-month sales.

The table below shows summary valuation data for PANW

Valuation Multiples - PANW					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/S F12M	Current	6.73	7.77	4.12	3.72
	5-Year High	11.98	8.35	4.12	3.72
	5-Year Low	3.51	5.32	2.32	2.53
	5-Year Median	6.31	6.63	3.14	3.05
EV/FCF TTM	Current	36.08	27.74	22.81	18.68
	5-Year High	46.52	28.60	22.81	33.53
	5-Year Low	11.73	14.80	12.11	13.90
	5-Year Median	19.28	19.77	19.44	20.44
EV/Sales TTM	Current	7.71	8.25	4.80	3.31
	5-Year High	15.86	9.00	4.80	3.46
	5-Year Low	3.35	4.89	2.59	2.14
	5-Year Median	7.04	6.80	3.63	2.87

As of 08/19/2020

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 49% (128 out of 252)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. (CHKP)	Neutral	3
Cisco Systems, Inc. (CSCO)	Neutral	3
CyberArk Software Ltd. (CYBR)	Neutral	4
FireEye, Inc. (FEYE)	Neutral	2
Fortinet, Inc. (FTNT)	Neutral	3
Juniper Networks, Inc. (JNPR)	Neutral	3
Proofpoint, Inc. (PFPT)	Neutral	2
Qualys, Inc. (QLYS)	Neutral	2

Industry Comparison Industry: Security				Industry Peers		
	PANW	X Industry	S&P 500	CHKP	FEYE	FTNT
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	2	3
VGM Score	D	-	-	C	C	B
Market Cap	26.87 B	4.11 B	23.61 B	18.63 B	3.37 B	20.96 B
# of Analysts	14	10.5	14	12	11	12
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.65%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Value Score	D	-	-	C	F	D
Cash/Price	0.08	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.28	0.07
EV/EBITDA	60.63	32.82	13.36	17.24	-39.96	35.81
PEG Ratio	2.00	2.62	2.99	2.64	5.53	3.11
Price/Book (P/B)	36.08	10.08	3.16	5.47	5.10	38.49
Price/Cash Flow (P/CF)	53.32	42.37	12.71	21.56	NA	44.46
P/E (F1)	46.79	43.50	21.82	19.39	60.83	43.50
Price/Sales (P/S)	8.23	8.23	2.47	9.19	3.68	8.90
Earnings Yield	2.16%	2.23%	4.37%	5.16%	1.67%	2.30%
Debt/Equity	2.45	0.74	0.76	0.00	1.52	0.00
Cash Flow (\$/share)	5.05	2.13	6.94	5.94	-0.18	2.91
Growth Score	C	-	-	C	A	A
Hist. EPS Growth (3-5 yrs)	NA%	10.74%	10.44%	9.71%	NA	122.35%
Proj. EPS Growth (F1/F0)	21.30%	11.44%	-5.97%	7.75%	390.90%	20.55%
Curr. Cash Flow Growth	119.25%	45.71%	5.22%	-0.22%	-24.85%	45.71%
Hist. Cash Flow Growth (3-5 yrs)	69.30%	37.87%	8.52%	4.14%	13.41%	46.74%
Current Ratio	1.29	1.65	1.33	1.44	1.66	1.37
Debt/Capital	70.98%	50.57%	44.50%	0.00%	60.30%	0.00%
Net Margin	-7.01%	7.12%	10.13%	41.21%	-26.68%	17.46%
Return on Equity	-6.50%	5.88%	14.67%	24.29%	-16.21%	40.58%
Sales/Assets	0.48	0.48	0.51	0.36	0.33	0.67
Proj. Sales Growth (F1/F0)	17.03%	6.89%	-1.54%	2.69%	3.30%	17.44%
Momentum Score	C	-	-	C	C	A
Daily Price Chg	1.40%	0.64%	-0.38%	0.37%	0.98%	-0.32%
1 Week Price Chg	-0.82%	-1.49%	1.09%	0.18%	-6.51%	-2.60%
4 Week Price Chg	7.64%	-0.16%	2.23%	4.11%	9.46%	-3.56%
12 Week Price Chg	16.26%	10.24%	6.91%	19.44%	24.83%	-1.25%
52 Week Price Chg	32.25%	17.28%	2.28%	17.28%	10.59%	58.00%
20 Day Average Volume	686,227	686,227	1,899,976	1,282,956	5,736,553	1,309,175
(F1) EPS Est 1 week change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
(F1) EPS Est 4 week change	0.00%	3.80%	1.70%	4.41%	37.41%	8.16%
(F1) EPS Est 12 week change	0.00%	3.74%	3.08%	4.28%	37.41%	10.73%
(Q1) EPS Est Mthly Chg	NA%	5.08%	0.83%	3.40%	49.28%	7.69%

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	C
VGM Score	D

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

This report contains independent commentary to be used for informational purposes only. The analysts contributing to this report do not hold any shares of this stock. The analysts contributing to this report do not serve on the board of the company that issued this stock. The EPS and revenue forecasts are the Zacks Consensus estimates, unless indicated otherwise on the reports first page. Additionally, the analysts contributing to this report certify that the views expressed herein accurately reflect the analysts personal views as to the subject securities and issuers. ZIR certifies that no part of the analysts compensation was, is, or will be, directly or indirectly, related to the specific recommendation or views expressed by the analyst in the report.

Additional information on the securities mentioned in this report is available upon request. This report is based on data obtained from sources we believe to be reliable, but is not guaranteed as to accuracy and does not purport to be complete. Any opinions expressed herein are subject to change.

ZIR is not an investment advisor and the report should not be construed as advice designed to meet the particular investment needs of any investor. Prior to making any investment decision, you are advised to consult with your broker, investment advisor, or other appropriate tax or financial professional to determine the suitability of any investment. This report and others like it are published regularly and not in response to episodic market activity or events affecting the securities industry.

This report is not to be construed as an offer or the solicitation of an offer to buy or sell the securities herein mentioned. ZIR or its officers, employees or customers may have a position long or short in the securities mentioned and buy or sell the securities from time to time. ZIR is not a broker-dealer. ZIR may enter into arms-length agreements with broker-dealers to provide this research to their clients. Zacks and its staff are not involved in investment banking activities for the stock issuer covered in this report.

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.

No part of this report can be reprinted, republished or transmitted electronically without the prior written authorization of ZIR.