

TE Connectivity Ltd. (TEL)

\$96.60 (As of 08/31/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$101.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 01/02/20)

Prior Recommendation: Underperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:B

Value: C

Growth: C

Momentum: A

Summary

TE Connectivity is benefiting from strong momentum across data centers. This is aiding growth in the company's Communications Solutions segment. Further, strengthening momentum of Industrial Solutions in China remains positive. Additionally, the company's global manufacturing strategy is acting as a tailwind. We believe solid execution of the company's strategic plans especially cost reduction and footprint consolidation initiatives are likely to remain key catalysts. Further, improving Transportation segment remains a tailwind for the company. Notably, the stock has outperformed its industry on a year-to-date basis. However, uncertainties related to coronavirus pandemic remain concerns. Further, slowdown in the global auto-production is a headwind. Also, delays in elective procedures due to ongoing pandemic are overhangs.

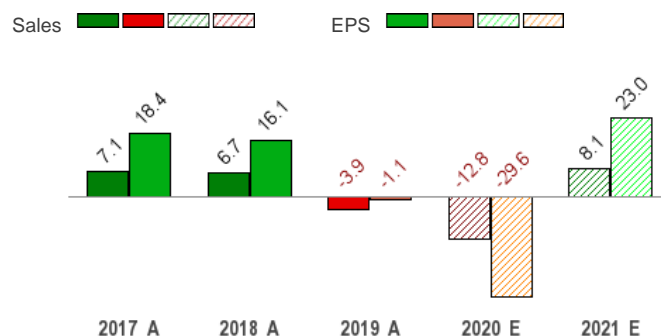
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$101.00 - \$48.62
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,407,104
Market Cap	\$31.9 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	0.8%
Beta	1.38
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$1.92 / 2.0%
Industry	Electronics - Miscellaneous Components
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 25% (62 out of 251)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	40.5%
Last Sales Surprise	6.8%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.5%
Expected Report Date	11/04/2020
Earnings ESP	9.3%
P/E TTM	21.9
P/E F1	24.7
PEG F1	2.4
P/S TTM	2.6

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	2,957 E	3,231 E	3,250 E	3,145 E	12,675 E
2020	3,168 A	3,195 A	2,548 A	2,820 E	11,728 E
2019	3,347 A	3,412 A	3,389 A	3,300 A	13,448 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	\$1.00 E	\$1.20 E	\$1.27 E	\$1.26 E	\$4.81 E
2020	\$1.21 A	\$1.29 A	\$0.59 A	\$0.81 E	\$3.91 E
2019	\$1.29 A	\$1.42 A	\$1.50 A	\$1.33 A	\$5.55 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 08/31/2020. The reports text is as of 09/01/2020.

Overview

TE Connectivity based in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, manufactures and designs products that connect and protect the flow of power and data inside millions of products used by consumers and industries. The company partners with customers in a broad array of industries ranging from consumer electronics, energy, and healthcare to automotive, aerospace and communication networks.

TE Connectivity reports under the following three segments –

Transportation Solutions (58.2% of total fiscal 2019 revenues): The segment caters to the needs of automotive, commercial transportation and sensors end markets. It offers sensor solutions and automotive connectivity solutions and products. Its electronic components comprising, connectors, wire and cable, circuit protection devices, heat shrink tubing and molded parts. It also provides application tooling and custom-engineered solutions for the aerospace, defense and marine markets.

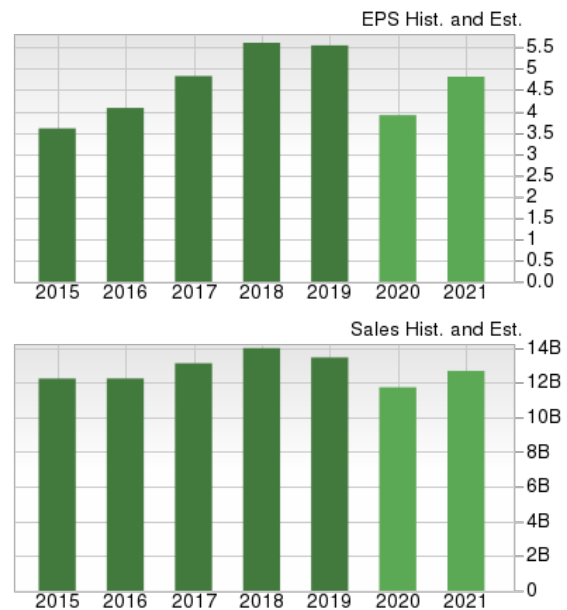
Industrial Solutions (29.4%): The segment caters to growing demand for the company's products in the end markets – industrial equipment, energy, and aerospace, defense, oil and gas. TE Connectivity supplies electronic components, including connectors, relays, circuit protection devices, antennas and heat shrink tubing for industrial machinery, consumer devices, data communications and household appliance markets. Further, it also offers intelligent building and rail products.

Communication Solutions (12.4%): The segment offers data and devices, appliances. Also, it is a leader in developing, manufacturing, installing, and maintaining some of the world's most advanced sub-sea fiber optic communications systems. This segment caters to demands of appliances, and data and devices end-markets.

Further, the company generates revenues by operating in three organized geographic regions – Europe/Middle East/Africa (EMEA), Asia-Pacific and Americas.

TE Connectivity had approximately 78,000 employees worldwide as of the end of fiscal year 2019. Out of this total employee strength, there were 25,000 employed in Americas, 22,000 in Asia-Pacific and 31,000 in EMEA region.

Notably, the company sells products via direct sales channels and third-party distributors in 150 countries.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ TE Connectivity's long-term growth strategy rests on market expansion through focus on harsh environment applications, efforts to reduce fixed cost for margin expansion, and execute a balanced capital allocation strategy to conduct bolt-on acquisitions and return capital back shareholders— to stoke growth. Moreover, continued progress on strategic priorities and solid execution along with an overarching business model are expected to continue benefiting TE Connectivity.
- ▲ TE Connectivity is the market leader in the connectivity and sensor business, armed with a comprehensive portfolio. About 80% of TE Connectivity's revenues are driven by harsh environment applications. Over the past five years, the company's harsh business applications have had experienced mid-single digit growth, driving top-line growth. This apart, the sensor business is anticipated to see strong design win momentum, fuelled by the growth of automotive space and contribute significantly to the top-line growth of the company. Going forward, the company believes that this business will provide ample opportunities of margin expansion. In a nutshell, TE Connectivity expects its harsh-environment application business to perform well, mainly supported by secular trends like increased safety features, autonomous driving systems, higher emission standards and infotainment.
- ▲ TE Connectivity's Industrial business has ample room for growth. The company expects industrial solutions to grow on an organic basis, driven by the continued strength of industrial equipment and aerospace segments. In a bid to further focus more on gaining industrial leadership, the company has been continuously making efforts. Moreover, the sale of its subsea communications business (SubCom), which used to be sluggish, is allowing the company to focus more on its industrial pertaining solutions.
- ▲ In order to strengthen its core business, TE Connectivity constantly looks for strategic acquisitions, particularly in sensor and harsh weather management segments. Over the past year, strategic acquisitions have given TE a leading position in solutions for the minimally-invasive medical market, fortified its portfolio of industrial connectors and bolstered our offering of sensors for the auto market. Hence, the company is taking measures to broaden offerings through acquisitions to maximize its growth potential.

TE Connectivity's harsh-environment application business and industrial solutions are positives. Secular trends in autonomous driving systems and infotainment areas are tailwinds.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ The sluggishness in oil and gas markets and its derivative impact on industrial market will likely act as strong headwinds for TE Connectivity. Also, low prices in oil & gas are reducing sales in industrial equipment business as well as areas like factory equipments and rail. Helicopter demand has also been impacted negatively, which can prove to be a drag on the company's aerospace business. Also, a major portion of the company's net sales is invoiced in currencies other than the U.S. dollar and management expects non-U.S. dollar revenue to represent a significant and likely increased portion of future net revenue. Therefore, when the U.S. Dollar strengthens in relation to the currencies of the countries where TE Connectivity sells its products, the dollar reported revenue and income will decrease.
- ▼ TE Connectivity also has a leveraged balance sheet. As of Jun 26, 2020, the company's net debt was \$3.6 billion compared with \$3.5 billion as of Mar 31, 2020. Accumulating high debt levels might restrict sufficient cash flow generation which is needed to meet future debt obligations. Moreover, this may keep the company away from accessing the debt market and refinancing at suitable rates. Further, the company's debt-to-total capital was 31.1% as of Jun 26, 2020 which increased from 29% as of Mar 31, 2020.
- ▼ TE Connectivity operates in a highly competitive market for electronic components and expects that both direct and indirect competition will increase in the future. Notably, the company faces stiff competition from Amphenol and Molex in all its reporting segments. The competition is across product lines from other companies ranging in size from large, diversified manufacturers to small, highly specialized manufacturers. In the recent times, the electronic components industry has become increasingly concentrated and globalized and the major competitors have significant financial resources and technological capabilities. A number of these competitors compete on the basis of price and in some cases enjoy lower production costs for certain products. Therefore, increased competition results in price reductions, reduced margins, or loss of market share, any of which has an adverse affect on the results of operations, financial position, and cash flows.

Sluggishness in oil and gas markets and its derivative impact on other industrial markets are acting as strong headwinds for TE Connectivity.

Last Earnings Report

TE Connectivity's Q3 Earnings & Revenues Beat Estimates

TE Connectivity reported third-quarter fiscal 2020 adjusted earnings of 59 cents per share, beating the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 40.5%.

However, the bottom line declined 60.7% on a year-over-year basis and 54.3% sequentially.

Net sales in the reported quarter were \$2.5 billion, which surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$2.4 billion. However, the figure slumped 24.8% from the year-ago quarter and 20.2% from the previous quarter.

The year-over-year decline can be attributed to weakness across the key end-markets, which affected performance of Transportation and Industrial segments in the reported quarter. Moreover, coronavirus-induced disruptions remained concerns.

Further, the company's total orders came in at \$2.4 billion during the quarter under review, which declined 29.1% sequentially.

Nevertheless, the company's global manufacturing strategy and solid growth in data center market remained positives.

Additionally, strong performance by Communications segment in the fiscal third quarter was a tailwind.

However, uncertainties related coronavirus pandemic remain concerns.

Nevertheless, continued solid execution of the company's strategic plans especially cost reduction and footprint consolidation initiatives are key catalysts.

Top-Line in Detail

TE Connectivity operates in three organized segments.

Transportation Solutions: The company generated sales worth \$1.3 billion (49.3% of net sales) in the reported quarter, down 36.2% on a year-over-year basis. This can be attributed to weakness in auto production globally, which resulted in a year-over-year decline of 44% in automotive sales. Further, sluggishness in commercial transportation led to year-over-year fall of 27% in sales from this particular space. Additionally, TE Connectivity experienced 3% decrease in the sensors business year over year.

Industrial Solutions: This segment generated sales of \$865 million (33.9% of net sales), which fell 13.9% year over year. This was primarily due to sluggishness in the commercial aerospace that led to decline of 23% year over year in sales generated from aerospace, defence and marine market in the reported quarter.

Further, the company witnessed a decline of 14% in the industrial equipment sales from the year-ago quarter. Although the company performed sluggishly in North America and Europe, it delivered growth in China.

Moreover, delays in elective procedures due to ongoing pandemic led to year-over-year decline of 9% in medical sales. Additionally, energy sales fell 2% from the year-ago quarter due to sluggishness in North American region, which did offset growth in Europe and China.

Communications Solutions: This segment generated sales of \$428 million (16.8% of net sales), improving 2.9% year over year. Although the company witnessed 11% decline in appliances, it witnessed year-over-year improvement of 13% in data centers, which remained a major positive.

Operating Details

Per management, gross margin came in 27.7%, contracting 500 basis points (bps) from the year-ago quarter.

We note that R&D expenses were \$146 million, which declined 7.6% year over year. Further, selling, general, and administrative expenses were \$321 million, down 9.8% year over year. Further, acquisition and integration expenses totaled \$8 million, declining 11.1% from the year-ago quarter.

However, restructuring costs increased 46.3% from the year-ago quarter to \$98 million in the reported quarter.

Consequently, adjusted operating margin came in at 9.4%, contracting from 17.6% in the prior-year quarter.

Balance Sheet & Cash Flow

As of Jun 26, 2020, TE Connectivity's cash and cash equivalents were \$474 million, lower than \$796 million as of Mar 27, 2020.

Long-term debt was \$3.4 billion, down from \$3.7 billion in the previous quarter.

The company generated \$380 million of cash from operations in the reported quarter, down from \$481 million in the prior quarter.

Further, free cash flow of \$280 million was generated in the reported quarter. Additionally, TE Connectivity paid out \$241 million to shareholders during the reported quarter.

Quarter Ending	06/2020
Report Date	Jul 29, 2020
Sales Surprise	6.82%
EPS Surprise	40.48%
Quarterly EPS	0.59
Annual EPS (TTM)	4.42

Guidance

The company anticipates net sales to be up 10% sequentially in fourth-quarter fiscal 2020. Improving Transportation segment is likely to drive the top line.

Recent News

On **May 5, 2020**, TE Connectivity's Board of Directors approved a quarterly dividend of 48 cents per share for the shareholders of the record as of May 22 payable on Jun 5.

On **Mar 12, 2020**, TE Connectivity acquired 71.87% stake in First Sensor which a sensor technology company. The acquisition is expected to add strength to the company's sensor business.

Valuation

TE Connectivity shares are up 2.4% in the year-to-date period and 7.6% over the trailing 12-month period. While stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are down 1.6%, the same in the Zacks Computer & Technology sector are up 14.6% in the year-to-date period. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and the sector is up 8.3% and 28.5%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 3.1% in the year-to-date period and 13.7% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 20.37X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 21.22X for the Zacks sub-industry, 27.38X for the Zacks sector and 23.04X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 20.8X and as low as 9.73X, with a 5-year median of 15.67X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$101 price target reflects 21.29X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for TEL

Valuation Multiples - TEL					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	20.37	21.22	27.38	23.04
	5-Year High	20.8	21.38	27.38	23.04
	5-Year Low	9.73	13.9	16.72	15.25
	5-Year Median	15.67	17.11	19.7	17.6
P/S F12M	Current	2.53	1.72	4.34	3.93
	5-Year High	2.57	1.87	4.34	3.93
	5-Year Low	1.33	0.94	2.32	2.53
	5-Year Median	2.09	1.48	3.15	3.07
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	9.07	8.13	12.65	12.5
	5-Year High	24.75	16.51	14.15	13.29
	5-Year Low	6	5.45	7.59	8.22
	5-Year Median	11.73	8.69	10.93	10.91

As of 08/31/2020

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 25% (62 out of 251)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Amphenol Corporation (APH)	Outperform	2
Applied Materials, Inc. (AMAT)	Neutral	2
Broadcom Inc. (AVGO)	Neutral	3
Eastman Chemical Company (EMN)	Neutral	3
Honeywell International Inc. (HON)	Neutral	3
MACOM Technology Solutions Holdings, Inc. (MTSI)	Neutral	3
STMicroelectronics N.V. (STM)	Neutral	2
Belden Inc (BDC)	Underperform	5

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Electronics - Miscellaneous Components				Industry Peers		
	TEL	X Industry	S&P 500	AMAT	APH	MTSI
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Outperform	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	2	2	3
VGM Score	B	-	-	C	C	B
Market Cap	31.88 B	108.46 M	23.72 B	56.26 B	32.76 B	2.38 B
# of Analysts	8	2	14	10	8	7
Dividend Yield	1.99%	0.00%	1.65%	1.43%	0.91%	0.00%
Value Score	C	-	-	C	D	F
Cash/Price	0.01	0.15	0.07	0.08	0.04	0.11
EV/EBITDA	12.94	7.34	13.28	14.72	18.29	-10.01
PEG F1	2.44	2.90	3.03	1.07	4.40	NA
P/B	3.49	1.91	3.17	5.88	6.82	8.72
P/CF	12.59	12.07	12.87	17.57	22.26	34.51
P/E F1	25.06	26.43	21.63	15.14	33.03	37.00
P/S TTM	2.61	1.25	2.53	3.46	4.04	4.81
Earnings Yield	4.05%	2.87%	4.39%	6.61%	3.02%	2.69%
Debt/Equity	0.37	0.18	0.70	0.57	0.78	2.50
Cash Flow (\$/share)	7.67	0.63	6.93	3.51	4.93	1.03
Growth Score	C	-	-	C	C	A
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	9.32%	9.60%	10.41%	28.18%	11.31%	-48.55%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-29.50%	-27.39%	-4.75%	33.82%	-11.13%	432.02%
Current Cash Flow Growth	-2.61%	-16.49%	5.22%	-35.58%	-1.02%	-30.98%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	3.85%	8.31%	8.49%	13.90%	10.51%	-8.89%
Current Ratio	1.43	2.37	1.35	2.86	2.59	4.74
Debt/Capital	27.08%	18.33%	42.92%	36.28%	43.95%	71.40%
Net Margin	-0.81%	3.42%	10.25%	19.58%	13.56%	-11.20%
Return on Equity	15.06%	6.40%	14.66%	38.81%	23.39%	2.57%
Sales/Assets	0.63	0.83	0.50	0.80	0.72	0.44
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-12.79%	0.00%	-1.40%	17.15%	-3.45%	7.36%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	C	B	A
Daily Price Change	-1.37%	0.00%	-0.82%	-2.33%	0.02%	-2.38%
1-Week Price Change	4.70%	0.00%	2.59%	1.28%	1.42%	-1.03%
4-Week Price Change	7.58%	1.56%	3.55%	-5.25%	2.24%	-16.15%
12-Week Price Change	5.40%	0.00%	-0.44%	2.84%	5.50%	5.96%
52-Week Price Change	5.90%	5.90%	2.80%	28.28%	25.43%	81.42%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,407,104	43,959	1,839,384	7,855,648	1,041,686	433,019
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.18%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.48%	0.00%	0.20%	6.66%	0.00%	10.18%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	4.36%	4.36%	3.87%	6.66%	11.07%	110.78%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	1.35%	0.00%	0.00%	14.30%	0.00%	0.00%

Source: Zacks Investment Research

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	C
Growth Score	C
Momentum Score	A
VGM Score	B

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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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 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.