

TransUnion (TRU)

\$92.75 (As of 01/14/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$98.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 10/28/20)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:B

Value: C

Growth: B

Momentum: A

Summary

TransUnion has an attractive business model with highly recurring and diversified revenue streams, significant operating leverage, low capital requirements and stable cash flows. Huge data base is its most distinguishing asset and perhaps the biggest barrier to entry for competitors. The company serves a broad range of customers across multiple geographies and verticals. Acquisitions act as a growth catalyst, helping the company expand international footprint. Partly due to these positives, the stock has improved in the past year. However, TransUnion operates in a highly competitive market, which restricts its pricing power and limits profitability to some extent. Adverse developments in the debt, consumer credit and financial services markets could hamper the company's growth. Seasonality and high debt continues to be major concerns.

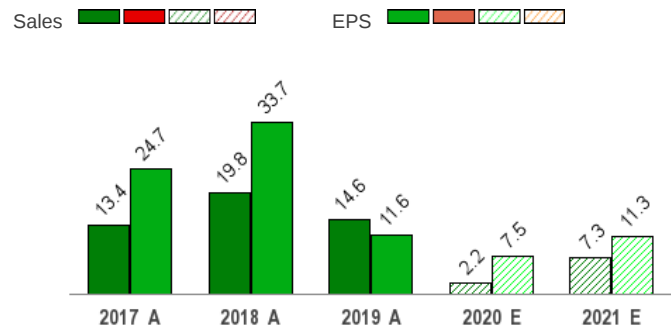
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$102.80 - \$52.50
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,018,192
Market Cap	\$17.7 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	-6.5%
Beta	1.25
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.30 / 0.3%
Industry	Business - Information Services
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 31% (175 out of 253)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	6.6%
Last Sales Surprise	2.3%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.2%
Expected Report Date	02/16/2021
Earnings ESP	1.3%
P/E TTM	31.4
P/E F1	27.8
PEG F1	4.0
P/S TTM	6.5

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	704 E	698 E	745 E	748 E	2,913 E
2020	688 A	634 A	696 A	695 E	2,714 E
2019	619 A	662 A	689 A	686 A	2,656 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	\$0.77 E	\$0.80 E	\$0.89 E	\$0.88 E	\$3.34 E
2020	\$0.73 A	\$0.66 A	\$0.81 A	\$0.79 E	\$3.00 E
2019	\$0.60 A	\$0.69 A	\$0.76 A	\$0.75 A	\$2.79 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 01/14/2021. The reports text is as of 01/15/2021.

Overview

Headquartered in Chicago, IL, TransUnion (TRU) is one of the leading global providers of risk and information solutions to businesses and consumers. The company provides consumer reports, risk scores, analytical services and decision-making capabilities to businesses. What sets TransUnion apart are its distinctive and comprehensive datasets, next-generation technology and its analytics and decision-making capabilities — which enable it to deliver insights across the complete consumer lifecycle. TransUnion boasts rich domain proficiency across a wide range of industry verticals, including insurance, healthcare and financial services. It also caters to verticals like wireless, real estate and general commercial/business information. Possession of both nationwide consumer credit data and comprehensive, diverse public records data, enables the company better predict behaviors, assess risk and address a broader set of business issues for its customers.

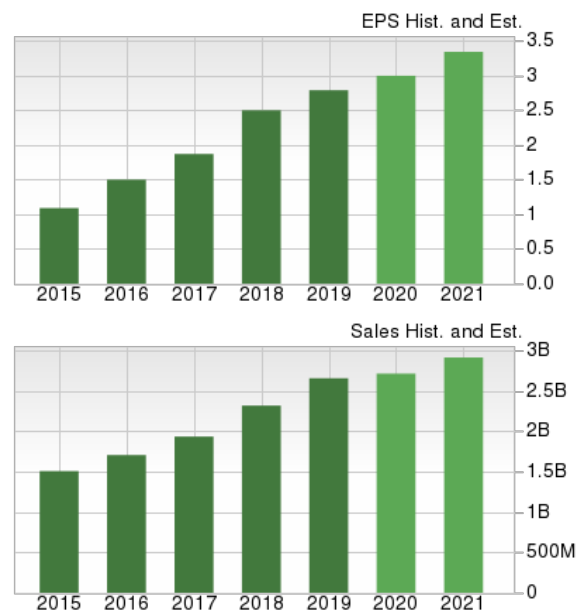
With a presence in more than 30 countries and territories, TransUnion is spread across North America, Latin America, the United Kingdom, Africa, Asia Pacific and India.

The company's operations are organized into three operating segments: U.S. Information Services (USIS), International and Consumer Interactive.

USIS segment (62% of total revenue in 2018) offers consumer reports, risk scores, analytical services and decision-making capabilities. Its services are used to acquire new customers, assess consumers' ability to pay for services, identify cross-selling opportunities, measure and manage debt portfolio risk, verify consumer identities, and investigate potential fraud, among others.

International segment (21%) delivers online data services, marketing services, credit reports, analytics, decision services, and other value-added risk management services as well as consumer services.

Consumer Interactive segment (20%) provides solutions including credit reports and scores, credit monitoring, fraud protection and resolution and financial management solutions. These solutions enable consumers easily manage their personal finances and take precautions against identity theft. Its products are provided through user-friendly online and mobile interfaces. The segment serves consumers through both direct and indirect channels.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ TransUnion's addressable market includes the **burgeoning Big Data and analytics market**, which is expanding at a rapidly accelerating pace as companies comprehend the advantages of building an analytical enterprise where decisions are derived from data and insights. Numerous underlying trends are supporting this market growth, including the creation of massive amounts of data; advances in technology and analytics that allow data to be processed more swiftly and efficiently; and mounting demand for these business insights across industries and geographies. Research firm IDC projects that worldwide revenues for big data and business analytics (BDA) solutions will grow at a five-year compounded annual growth rate ("CAGR") of 13.2%, and will reach \$274.3 billion in 2022. In order to capitalize on the immense potential growth in this market, TransUnion has leveraged its next-generation technology to strengthen its analytics capabilities and has further expanded its database.
- ▲ TransUnion's **gigantic treasure trove of data** is its most distinguishing asset and also perhaps the biggest barrier to entry for competitors. Acquiring or building such data involves huge costs, making it extremely difficult for a new company to build the contacts and data that TransUnion already has. This fortifies TransUnion's ability to sustain its competitive advantage and protect its market share.
- ▲ TransUnion's successful **acquisition strategy** has played an important role in its growth over the last five to six years. The strategy focuses on investment in unique and differentiated data assets, acquiring new capabilities for expanding in vertical markets and expanding international footprints. In 2019, the company acquired TruSignal, a people-based marketing technology company. This should strengthen TransUnion's digital marketing solutions. In 2018, TransUnion has acquired Rubixis, Callcredit, iovation and Healthcare Payment Specialists. These buyouts are helping the company with new market entry and portfolio diversification. They are contributing significantly to the company's top-line growth.
- ▲ TransUnion serves a **broad range of customers** across multiple geographies and verticals. The company has an attractive business model with highly recurring and diversified revenue streams, significant operating leverage, low capital requirements and strong and stable cash flows. In addition, the inherent nature and significance of its solutions in customers' decision-making endow it with high customer retention and revenue visibility. Impressively, TransUnion deals with top 10 largest U.S. consumer lending banks, the top ten credit card issuers, the biggest 25 auto lenders, the top 20 largest auto insurance carriers and thousands of healthcare providers as well as federal, state and local government agencies. The company has made significant investments to modernize its infrastructure and facilitate the seamless transition to the latest Big Data and analytics technologies. These enable TransUnion to expand its business and improve its cost structure.
- ▲ As emerging market economies continue to develop and mature, TransUnion is well-positioned to gain from the associated **favorable socio-economic trends**. Additionally, increased risk of identity theft due to data breaches and higher consumer awareness about the importance and usage of their credit information are propelling the demand for TransUnion's consumer solutions. This may have aided the company's share price which has improved 7.7% in the past six months.

TransUnion has an attractive business model with highly recurring and diversified revenue streams, significant operating leverage, low capital requirements and strong and stable cash flows.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ TransUnion's operating segments experiences **seasonality**. Evidently, the U.S. Markets witnesses soft sales in the first and fourth quarter relative to second and third quarters. The Consumer Interactive segment experiences weaker demand in the second half of the year. The company's International segment revenues fluctuate depending on local economic conditions and macroeconomic market trends. Seasonality causes considerable fluctuations in revenues and profits, thus making forecasting difficult.
- ▼ TransUnion's revenues are considerably influenced by the overall macroeconomic conditions, such as interest rates, employment levels, consumer confidence, accessibility of affordable credit and capital, inflation and housing demand. Revenues are also significantly affected by industry trends, including the demand for information services in insurance, financial services and healthcare industry. **Adverse developments in the debt, consumer credit and financial services** markets could hamper the company's growth.
- ▼ TransUnion has a **debt-laden balance sheet**. Total debt at the end of second-quarter 2020 was \$3.63 billion, flat sequentially. The total debt to total capital ratio of 0.62 is higher than the industry's 0.55 and the previous quarter's 0.61. An increase in debt to capitalization ratio indicates higher risk of insolvency in challenging times. Further, the company's cash and cash equivalent of \$432 million at the end of the second quarter was well below this debt level, underscoring that the company doesn't have enough cash to meet this debt burden. The cash level, however, can meet the short-term debt of \$56 million.
- ▼ TransUnion caters to a **highly competitive market**. Its competitors widely vary according to its business segment, geographical market and industry vertical that its solutions address. The high degree of competition restricts its pricing power and puts a strain on the bottom line.

TransUnion operates in a highly competitive market, which restricts its pricing power and limits profitability to some extent.

Last Earnings Report

TransUnion's Q3 Earnings and Revenues Beat Estimates

TransUnion reported solid third-quarter 2020 results, wherein its earnings and revenues surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate.

Adjusted earnings of 81 cents per share outpaced the consensus mark as well as the year-ago reported quarter's figure by 6.6%. Total revenues of \$696 million beat the consensus mark by 2.3% and improved 1% year over year on a reported basis, 2% on a constant-currency and 1% on an organic constant-currency basis.

TransUnion stated that in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the company continues to follow the work-from-home model and is trying to be disciplined in managing investment priorities and cost structure. The company continues to benefit from re-openings, government stimulus and successful proactive efforts to support its associates, customers and consumers during this time of crisis.

TransUnion continues to invest in Global Operations, Global Solutions and Project Rise to boost growth and efficiency in its businesses. Recently, the company completed the acquisitions of Signal in the third quarter and TruOptik early in the fourth quarter to boost its Media Vertical.

Revenues by Segments

U.S. Market revenues of \$438 million grew 4% year over year both on a reported and organic basis. Within the segment, Financial Services revenues of \$249 million climbed 11% year over year on a reported and an organic basis. Emerging Vertical revenues, including Healthcare, Insurance and all other verticals, were \$189 million, down 3% year over year on a reported and 4% on an organic basis.

International revenues declined 9% year over year on a reported basis and 7% on a constant-currency basis to \$145 million.

Revenues from Canada increased 2% on a reported basis and 3% on a constant-currency basis to \$24 million. Revenues from the United Kingdom came in at \$44 million, down 7% on a reported basis and 11% on a constant-currency basis. India revenues declined 13% on a reported basis and 8% on a constant-currency basis to \$24 million. Asia-Pacific revenues came in at \$15 million, down 4% on a reported basis and 6% on a constant-currency basis. Revenues from Latin America decreased 18% on a reported basis and 5% on a constant-currency basis to \$22 million. Africa revenues were down 22% on a reported basis and 10% on a constant-currency basis to \$12 million.

Consumer Interactive segment revenues improved 3% from the prior-year-quarter figure to \$132 million.

Operating Performance

Adjusted EBITDA was \$270 million, down 4% year over year on a reported basis and 3% on constant-currency as well as organic constant-currency basis. Adjusted EBITDA margin came in at 38.8%, down 190 basis points.

Key Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Figures

TransUnion had \$554 million in cash and cash equivalents at the end of the third quarter compared with \$432 million at the end of the prior quarter. Long-term debt was \$3.6 billion, flat year on year.

The company generated \$178.8 million in cash from operating activities and CapEx was \$44.1 million. It paid out \$14.3 million in dividends in the quarter.

Outlook

For the fourth quarter of 2020, revenues are anticipated between \$678 million and \$698 million. Adjusted earnings are anticipated to be between 74 and 80 cents per share. Adjusted EBITDA is anticipated between \$255 million and \$271 million.

For 2020, the company expects revenues between \$2.696 billion and \$2.715 billion. Adjusted earnings are anticipated between \$2.94 and \$3.01 per share. Adjusted EBITDA is anticipated between \$1.031 billion and \$1.047 billion.

Quarter Ending	09/2020
Report Date	Oct 27, 2020
Sales Surprise	2.33%
EPS Surprise	6.58%
Quarterly EPS	0.81
Annual EPS (TTM)	2.95

Recent News

On **Dec 15, 2020**, TransUnion announced its partnership with a social risk analytics company, Socially Determined. The partnership focuses on leveraging Social Determinants of Health as well as clinical and claims data to provide healthcare stakeholders with social risk intelligence about the individuals and communities they serve.

On **Dec 10, 2020**, TransUnion announced its partnership with leading telematics services provider, The Floow. The objective of this partnership is to provide telematics insights to insurers. This will enable them to improve their overall customer experience and adjust their businesses per market shifts amid the pandemic.

On **Nov 12, 2020**, TransUnion announced that its partnership with Atlas Digital Group to aid cable operators and broadband internet service providers.

On **Nov 11, 2020**, TransUnion announced that its board of directors declared a cash dividend of 7.5 cents per share for third-quarter 2020. The dividend will be paid out on Dec 10 to shareholders of record on Nov 25.

On **Oct 1, 2020**, TransUnion announced that it will acquire Tru Optik, a data-marketplace and data-management platform for connected TV, streaming audio and gaming. The buyout is part of the company's ongoing investments in identity and consumer insights for forward-looking, digitally connected marketing solutions.

Valuation

TransUnion shares are up 7.7% in the past six months and 1.2% in the trailing 12-month period, respectively. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are up 3.1% while those in the Zacks Business Services sector are down 2.1% in the past six months. Over the past year, the sub-industry and the sector are down 7% and 10%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 18.7% in the past six months and 17.2% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 27.59X forward 12-month price-to-earnings, which compares to 28.83X for the Zacks sub-industry, 30.17X for the Zacks sector and 23.13X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 38.56X and as low as 17.93X, with a 5-year median of 27.02X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$98.00 price target reflects 29.15X price-to-earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for TRU

Valuation Multiples - TRU					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F 12M	Current	27.59	28.83	30.17	23.13
	5-Year High	38.56	30.61	31.03	23.79
	5-Year Low	17.93	19.56	18.68	15.3
	5-Year Median	27.02	22.78	21.36	17.83
P/S F12M	Current	6.04	7.72	5.88	4.53
	5-Year High	6.71	7.72	5.88	4.53
	5-Year Low	2.37	3.43	3.06	3.2
	5-Year Median	4.79	5	3.62	3.68
P/B TTM	Current	7.35	8.72	6.62	6.55
	5-Year High	8.14	11.33	6.84	6.58
	5-Year Low	2.8	4.29	3.3	3.73
	5-Year Median	6	6.58	5.5	4.94

As of 01/14/2021

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 31% (175 out of 253)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Alliance Data Systems Corporation (ADS)	Neutral	3
Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc. (BR)	Neutral	3
Equifax, Inc. (EFX)	Neutral	3
FactSet Research Systems Inc. (FDS)	Neutral	2
Fidelity National Information Services, Inc. (FIS)	Neutral	3
Fiserv, Inc. (FISV)	Neutral	3
Gartner, Inc. (IT)	Neutral	2
Paychex, Inc. (PAYX)	Neutral	2

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Business - Information Services				Industry Peers		
	TRU	X Industry	S&P 500	EFX	FISV	PAYX
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	3	2
VGM Score	B	-	-	D	B	F
Market Cap	17.65 B	11.51 B	27.40 B	21.61 B	72.39 B	31.76 B
# of Analysts	11	8	13	12	17	12
Dividend Yield	0.32%	0.00%	1.42%	0.88%	0.00%	2.82%
Value Score	C	-	-	D	C	D
Cash/Price	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.07	0.01	0.03
EV/EBITDA	21.03	23.35	14.74	1,459.20	27.70	16.88
PEG F1	3.95	3.29	2.60	2.17	1.30	3.75
P/B	7.35	7.36	3.77	7.28	2.23	10.99
P/CF	20.34	24.19	14.43	21.02	16.13	20.79
P/E F1	27.39	28.56	20.63	27.39	20.02	29.99
P/S TTM	6.53	7.35	3.02	5.52	4.81	7.99
Earnings Yield	3.60%	3.50%	4.73%	3.65%	4.99%	3.34%
Debt/Equity	1.48	0.57	0.70	1.10	0.64	0.28
Cash Flow (\$/share)	4.56	3.82	6.92	8.45	6.70	4.24
Growth Score	B	-	-	F	B	D
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	24.37%	15.26%	9.72%	3.98%	18.30%	9.92%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	11.49%	9.18%	12.26%	-2.94%	21.99%	-2.11%
Current Cash Flow Growth	14.29%	6.86%	5.20%	0.48%	147.85%	5.65%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	19.23%	13.86%	8.37%	8.37%	29.38%	12.12%
Current Ratio	1.97	1.32	1.38	0.97	1.06	1.28
Debt/Capital	59.71%	36.49%	41.97%	52.47%	39.48%	21.62%
Net Margin	12.00%	12.56%	10.44%	11.29%	6.01%	26.66%
Return on Equity	23.03%	17.10%	15.40%	29.20%	8.75%	37.99%
Sales/Assets	0.38	0.50	0.50	0.47	0.20	0.45
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	7.34%	5.14%	6.01%	6.67%	7.32%	-1.36%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	B	B	C
Daily Price Change	-0.95%	0.00%	0.11%	-2.48%	-2.05%	-1.66%
1-Week Price Change	-4.70%	0.46%	2.23%	-3.52%	2.57%	-1.24%
4-Week Price Change	-6.88%	-2.74%	2.96%	-8.32%	-5.86%	-7.92%
12-Week Price Change	7.80%	0.00%	13.26%	13.94%	7.04%	4.86%
52-Week Price Change	0.21%	7.45%	6.24%	17.62%	-10.17%	0.11%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,018,192	113,956	1,749,628	482,634	3,585,917	1,564,309
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.13%	-0.01%	-0.06%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.16%	0.01%	0.06%	-1.02%	0.08%	3.91%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	2.99%	1.97%	2.44%	2.72%	0.04%	3.97%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	0.34%	0.00%	0.00%	-1.61%	-0.08%	4.35%

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	C
Growth Score	B
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.