

Travelers Companies (TRV)

\$157.38 (As of 04/21/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$165.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:
Neutral

(Since: 03/12/21)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:A

Value: A

Growth: C

Momentum: C

Summary

Travelers' first-quarter earnings beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Shares have outperformed the industry in a year. The insurer boasts a strong market presence in auto, homeowners' insurance, commercial U.S. property-casualty insurance with an impressive inorganic growth story. High retention rate, increase in new business and positive renewal premium change bode well. Its commercial businesses continue to perform well owing to market stability. It remains optimistic about its personal line of business, given growth at the profitable agency auto and homeowners business. It generates sufficient capital to boost shareholder value and aims mid-teens core return on equity over time. However, exposure to cat loss induces volatility in underwriting results. Also, high costs weigh on margin expansion and high leverage ratio is a concern.

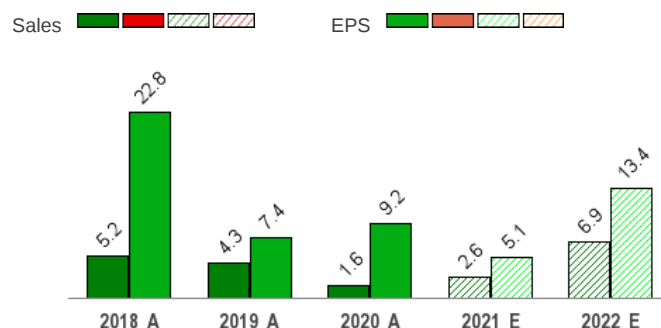
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$161.19 - \$85.10
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,405,088
Market Cap	\$39.2 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	10.9%
Beta	0.75
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$3.40 / 2.2%
Industry	Insurance - Property and Casualty
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 18% (209 out of 254)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	11.9%
Last Sales Surprise	0.7%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-1.1%
Expected Report Date	07/22/2021
Earnings ESP	2.2%
P/E TTM	14.8
P/E F1	14.6
PEG F1	1.5
P/S TTM	1.2

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	8,399 E	8,473 E	8,547 E	8,622 E	35,086 E
2021	8,269 A	8,096 E	8,182 E	8,264 E	32,814 E
2020	8,006 A	7,401 A	8,238 A	8,347 A	31,979 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	\$3.48 E	\$2.49 E	\$2.98 E	\$3.98 E	\$12.49 E
2021	\$2.73 A	\$2.24 E	\$2.58 E	\$3.70 E	\$11.01 E
2020	\$2.62 A	-\$0.20 A	\$3.12 A	\$4.91 A	\$10.48 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 04/21/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 04/22/2021.

Overview

Established in 1853 and is based in New York, NY, The Travelers Companies Inc., a holding company, is principally engaged, through its subsidiaries, in providing a wide variety of property and casualty insurance and surety products and services to businesses, organizations and individuals in the United States, and select international markets.

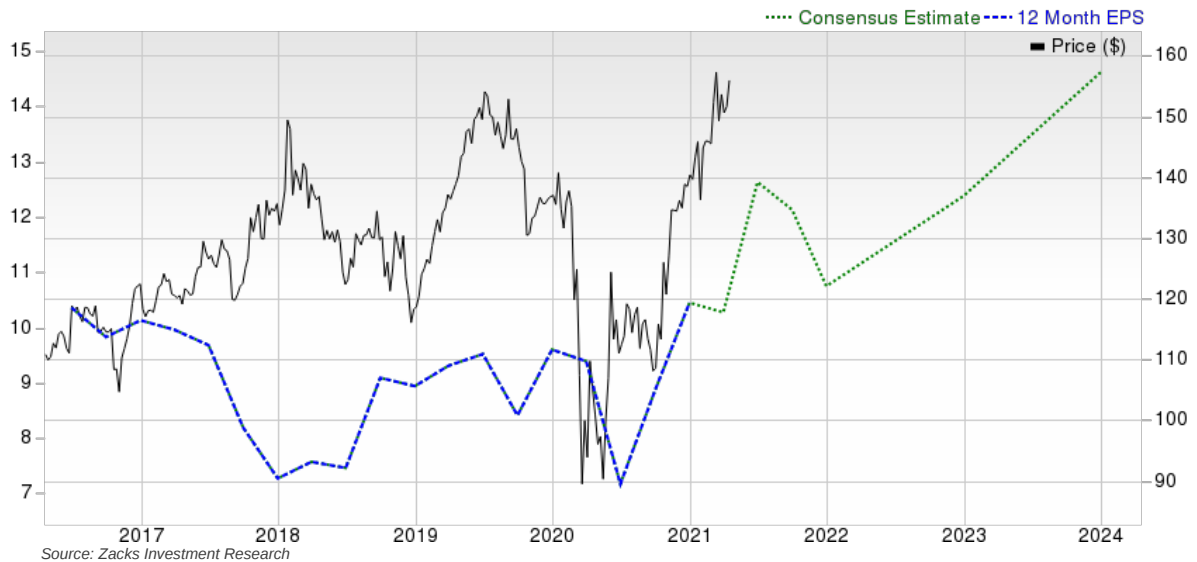
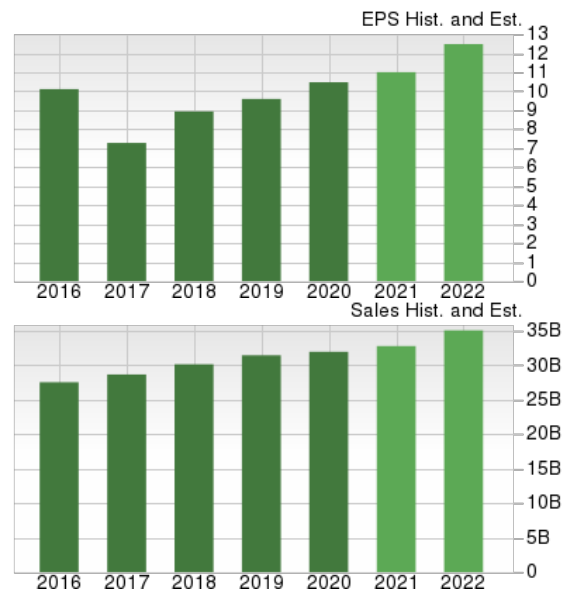
Travelers operates its business through three segments: The Business Insurance segment (52% of 2020 net premium written) offers a broad array of property and casualty insurance and insurance-related services to its customers, primarily in the United States, as well as in Canada, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, Brazil and throughout other parts of the world as a corporate member of Lloyd's.

Its products include offers workers' compensation, commercial automobile and property, general liability, commercial multi-peril, employers' liability, public and product liability, professional indemnity, marine, aviation, onshore and offshore energy, construction, terrorism, personal accident, and kidnap and ransom insurance products.

This segment operates through select accounts, which serve small businesses; commercial accounts that serve mid-sized businesses; national accounts, which serve large companies; and national property and other that serve large and mid-sized customers, commercial transportation industry, and agricultural businesses, as well as markets and distributes its products through brokers, wholesale agents, program managers, and specialized retail agents.

The Personal Insurance segment (38%) offers property and casualty insurance covering personal risks, primarily automobile and homeowners insurance to individuals primarily in the United States, as well as in Canada. The company distributes its products primarily through independent agencies and brokers.

The Bond & Specialty Insurance segment (10%) provides surety, fidelity, management and professional liability, and other property and casualty insurance products and related risk management services to its customers in the United States and certain specialty insurance products in Canada, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and Brazil.



Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ Shares of Travelers have outperformed the industry in a year. The stock has gained 56.7% compared with the industry's increase of 35.5%. Solid fundamentals are likely to drive shares in the days ahead.
- ▲ Travelers is one of the leading writers of auto and homeowners' insurance plus commercial U.S. property-casualty insurance. Quantum Auto 2.0 continues to drive results in Agency Auto as this lower-cost, lower-priced auto insurance product is live in all the planned markets. Going by the progress and continued growth at the profitable agency auto and homeowners business, the company remains optimistic about the trajectory of its personal lines of business. Net written premiums increased nearly 7%, driven by renewal premium change of almost 8% in homeowners business and strong retention and new business in both auto and home. New business for both auto and home combined was up 17% compared with the prior-year quarter, which is the ninth consecutive quarter of double-digit growth in new business. It reflects the continuing success of product, distribution and customer initiatives. We remain optimistic regarding the company's focus on implementing pricing and other actions to continue increasing returns and more importantly, improving profitability.
- ▲ Travelers' commercial businesses continue to perform well on the back of stability in the markets where it operates as well as the execution of its strategies. The company has successfully maintained historically high levels of retention and increase in new business, while achieving a positive renewal premium change.
- ▲ The company's investment income has increased over the last three years. After-tax net investment income increased 14% from the prior year quarter to \$590 million as higher returns in non-fixed income portfolio were partially offset by the impact of the expected decline in fixed income yields. The company expects that after-tax net investment income from that portfolio will be approximately \$420 million to \$430 million for each remaining quarter of 2021. It anticipates benefits of higher average levels of invested assets to be offset by a lower average yield on the portfolio, given a low interest rate environment.
- ▲ Travelers maintains a conservative balance sheet among its peers. It has been consistently increasing its book value for the past nine years. The company aims to generate increased earnings and capital, in excess of growth needs, and maintain balanced approach to rightsizing capital and growing book value per share over time as part of its long-term financial strategy. Adjusted book value per share, excluding unrealized investment gains and losses, was \$101.21 at Mar 31, 2021, up 2% from 2020 end and up 9% from a year ago quarter. It has been increasing core return on equity over the last three years and aims to generate mid-teens core ROE over time.
- ▲ The other positive factors that inspire our confidence in the stock are its consistent efforts to return excess capital to shareholders via dividend increases and share buybacks. The property & casualty insurer returned \$613 million to its shareholders in the first quarter of 2021, which includes \$397 million of share repurchases and \$216 million of dividends. Capacity remaining under the existing share repurchase authorization was \$805 million at the end of Mar 31, 2021. On Apr 20, 2021, the board approved a share repurchase authorization that added \$5 billion of repurchase capacity to the remaining \$805 million.

A compelling product portfolio, high retention rate, pricing gains, positive renewal rate changes, strong capital position, inorganic growth and prudent underwriting practices position Travelers well.

With respect to dividend hike, the board of directors raised quarterly dividend by 4% in first-quarter 2021. This is the 17th straight year of dividend increase and reflects five-year CAGR of 7.5% (2015-2021). Its current dividend yield of 2.2% is better than the industry average of 0.4%. The company generates strong cash flow (cash flows surged 89.5% in the first quarter of 2021 due to higher levels of cash received for premiums and lower levels of payments for claims and claim adjustment expenses) and has solid holding company liquidity. It is also diligently working toward improving leverage ratios.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ Exposure to catastrophe events always remains a headwind for property and casualty insurers. The company has been witnessing high level of catastrophe losses with combined ratio deterioration. In the first quarter of 2021, catastrophe loss totaled \$835 million, more than doubled from the year-ago period. Higher losses stemmed from winter storms and wind storms in several regions of the United States. Combined ratio deteriorated 110 bps year over year to 96.6.

The company has an active catastrophe reinsurance program, which should lend support in absorbing losses. It renewed underlying property aggregate catastrophe XOL Treaty for 2021, which will provide aggregate coverage of \$350 million, part of \$500 million of losses, an aggregate retention of \$1.9 billion. Through Mar 31, it accumulated \$915 million of qualifying losses toward the aggregate retention.

- ▼ Over the last two years, Travelers has been witnessing a rising debt level that has induced higher interest expenses, thereby restricting margin expansion to an extent. As of Mar 31, 2021, the company's debt was \$6.6 million, unchanged from the 2020-end level, with debt to total capital of 18.8%, deteriorating 50 bps from 2020 level and comparing unfavorably with the industry's measure of 20.6%. Further, the company's times interest earned in 2020 was 11.1, lower than the industry average of 14.2.
- ▼ Travelers has been witnessing rise in expenses over the past many quarters, which weighs on margins. In the first quarter of 2021, expenses increased 3.2% to \$7.4 billion primarily on higher amortization of deferred acquisition costs, claims and claim adjustment expenses and increased general and administrative expenses. However, net margin expanded 110 bps year over year in first quarter of 2021.
- ▼ Travelers' return on assets of 2.3% was lower than industry average of 2.7%. The return on assets reflects how profitable are a company's assets in generating revenues.

Exposure to catastrophe loss inducing underwriting volatility and high debt level leading to higher interest expenses restricting margin expansion are some of the headwinds faced by the company.

Last Earnings Report

Travelers Beats Q1 Earnings Estimates, Raises Dividend

The Travelers Companies reported first-quarter 2021 core income of \$2.73 per share, which beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$2.44. The bottom line increased 4% year over year.

The improvement was primarily driven by higher net favorable prior year reserve development, a higher underlying underwriting gain and higher net investment income. However, higher catastrophe losses were partial offsets. Shares of the company gained 3.6% in the pre-market trading session to reflect the outperformance.

Quarter Ending 03/2021

Report Date	Apr 20, 2021
Sales Surprise	0.73%
EPS Surprise	11.89%
Quarterly EPS	2.73
Annual EPS (TTM)	10.56

Behind Q1 Headlines

Travelers' total revenues increased 5.1% from the year-ago quarter to \$8.3 billion, primarily due to higher premiums and net investment income. Moreover, the top-line figure beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$8.2 billion. Net written premiums increased 2.2% year over year to \$7.5 billion driven by continued strong renewal rate change and retention across all the segments.

Net investment income increased 14.7% year over year to \$701 million pre-tax, primarily due to increase in income in non-fixed income investment portfolio. Travelers witnessed underwriting gain of \$217 million, down 24.7% year over year. Combined ratio deteriorated 110 basis points (bps) year over year to 96.6 due to higher catastrophe losses, partially offset by higher net favorable prior year reserve development and a lower underlying combined ratio.

At the end of the first quarter, statutory capital and surplus were \$22.4 billion. Debt-to-capital ratio (excluding after-tax net unrealized investment gains included in shareholders' equity) was 20.5%, up 20 basis points and within the company's target range of 15-25%. Adjusted book value per share was \$101.21, up 9% year over year. Core return on equity was 11%, down 50 bps year over year.

Segment Update

Business Insurance: Net written premiums decreased 2% year over year to about \$4.1 billion. The benefits of continued strong retention and higher renewal rate changes were offset by lower net written premiums in the workers' compensation product line.

Combined ratio deteriorated 130 bps year over year to 103.5 due to higher catastrophe losses, partially offset by a lower underlying combined ratio and higher net favorable prior year reserve development. Segment income increased 9.7% to \$317 million. The upside was due to higher underlying underwriting gain, higher net favorable prior year reserve development and higher net investment income, partially offset by higher catastrophe losses.

Bond & Specialty Insurance: Net written premiums rose 9% year over year to \$723 million, primarily driven by continued strong retention and increased levels of renewal premium change in management liability.

Combined ratio improved 70 bps year over year to 85.2 due to higher net favorable prior year reserve development and a lower underlying combined ratio, partially offset by higher catastrophe losses. Segment income improved 16.3% year over year to \$107 million, primarily due to higher underlying underwriting gain and net favorable prior year reserve development, partially offset by higher catastrophe losses.

Personal Insurance: Net written premiums of \$2.7 billion increased 7% year over year due to solid performance at Domestic Automobile and Domestic Homeowners and Other.

Combined ratio deteriorated 210 bps year over year to 90.3 due to higher catastrophe losses and a higher underlying combined ratio, partially offset by higher net favorable prior year reserve development. Segment income of \$254 million decreased 13.9% from the year-ago quarter's level, primarily attributable to higher catastrophe losses and a lower underlying underwriting gain, partially offset by higher net favorable prior year reserve development and higher net investment income.

Dividend and Share Repurchase Update

This property & casualty insurer returned \$613 million in the reported quarter. It bought back shares worth \$397 million. The board of directors approved a \$5 billion share repurchase program. This is in addition to the \$805 million that remained from previous authorizations as of Mar 31, 2021. The company's board also approved a 4% increase in quarterly dividend to 88 cents per share. The dividend will be paid out on Jun 30 to shareholders of record at the close of business as of Jun 10, 2021.

Valuation

Travelers shares are up 12.1% in the year-to-date period and 56.7% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Finance sector are up 15% and 13.3% in the year-to-date period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and sector are up 37.7% and 53%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 11.9% in the year-to-date period and 52% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 1.36x trailing 12-month book value, which compares to 1.34x for the Zacks sub-industry, 3.19x for the Zacks sector and 7.09x for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 1.72x and as low as 0.81x, with a 5-year median of 1.42x. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$165 price target reflects 1.42x book value.

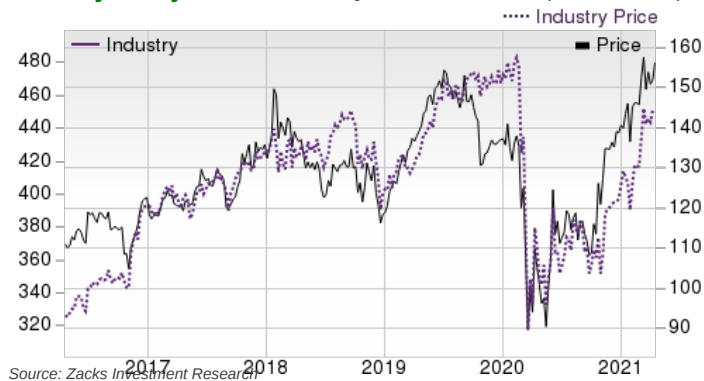
The table below shows summary valuation data for TRV

Valuation Multiples - TRV					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/B TTM	Current	1.36	1.34	3.19	7.09
	5-Year High	1.72	1.71	3.21	7.11
	5-Year Low	0.81	0.97	1.74	3.83
	5-Year Median	1.42	1.49	2.61	4.99
P/S F12M	Current	1.17	1.93	7.89	4.81
	5-Year High	1.39	11.41	7.89	4.81
	5-Year Low	0.63	1.5	5.03	3.21
	5-Year Median	1.16	1.84	6.16	3.71
P/E F12M	Current	13.99	30.4	16.81	23.02
	5-Year High	20.03	31.77	17.16	23.83
	5-Year Low	7.77	21.52	11.6	15.3
	5-Year Median	12.41	26.5	14.82	18.01

As of 04/21/2021

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 18% (209 out of 254)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
The Allstate Corporation (ALL)	Neutral	3
Chubb Limited (CB)	Neutral	3
Cincinnati Financial Corporation (CINF)	Neutral	4
The Progressive Corporation (PGR)	Neutral	3
Everest Re Group, Ltd. (RE)	Neutral	3
W.R. Berkley Corporation (WRB)	Neutral	3
Axis Capital Holdings Limited (AXS)	Underperform	3
CNA Financial Corporation (CNA)	Underperform	5

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Insurance - Property And Casualty				Industry Peers		
	TRV	X Industry	S&P 500	ALL	CB	PGR
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	3	3
VGM Score	A	-	-	C	B	B
Market Cap	39.16 B	1.88 B	30.14 B	36.90 B	72.79 B	58.39 B
# of Analysts	8	2	12	8	6	9
Dividend Yield	2.18%	1.07%	1.25%	2.64%	1.93%	0.40%
Value Score	A	-	-	A	A	A
Cash/Price	0.16	0.27	0.06	0.22	0.08	0.09
EV/EBITDA	4.37	7.73	17.29	4.88	15.57	7.65
PEG F1	1.48	2.35	2.38	1.31	1.45	2.46
P/B	1.39	1.14	4.06	1.32	1.23	3.53
P/CF	4.83	14.98	17.06	6.89	18.77	12.22
P/E F1	14.64	15.87	22.05	9.81	14.52	16.36
P/S TTM	1.21	1.00	3.46	0.82	1.94	1.30
Earnings Yield	6.90%	6.11%	4.40%	10.20%	6.89%	6.11%
Debt/Equity	0.23	0.22	0.66	0.28	0.25	0.33
Cash Flow (\$/share)	32.56	2.73	6.78	17.99	8.80	8.28
Growth Score	C	-	-	D	C	D
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	-2.22%	5.29%	9.39%	25.65%	-4.29%	44.90%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	2.56%	56.00%	15.97%	-14.94%	52.33%	-18.37%
Current Cash Flow Growth	4.39%	-11.44%	0.72%	26.93%	-25.67%	13.23%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	0.26%	3.40%	7.37%	15.95%	2.33%	27.43%
Current Ratio	0.37	0.43	1.39	0.33	0.32	0.43
Debt/Capital	18.81%	17.93%	41.19%	20.57%	20.42%	24.05%
Net Margin	8.74%	6.77%	10.60%	12.45%	9.42%	14.50%
Return on Equity	9.65%	5.33%	15.09%	18.91%	5.95%	25.59%
Sales/Assets	0.28	0.31	0.51	0.37	0.20	0.72
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	4.38%	0.00%	7.53%	5.55%	-5.42%	13.47%
Momentum Score	C	-	-	F	D	A
Daily Price Change	1.06%	1.06%	1.24%	0.84%	2.08%	1.42%
1-Week Price Change	2.84%	1.26%	1.43%	4.36%	1.29%	3.22%
4-Week Price Change	5.43%	5.27%	7.02%	9.79%	5.40%	9.43%
12-Week Price Change	12.82%	15.73%	15.76%	12.12%	13.76%	16.28%
52-Week Price Change	54.61%	45.90%	58.99%	21.48%	55.40%	22.69%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,405,088	94,594	1,778,154	1,693,893	1,784,182	2,631,122
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	2.06%	0.00%	0.00%	0.70%	0.00%	2.60%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-1.12%	0.00%	0.07%	-1.86%	-2.00%	2.93%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	0.55%	-0.63%	1.97%	-2.90%	-2.37%	10.49%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	4.43%	0.00%	0.00%	-3.21%	0.15%	3.08%

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	A
Growth Score	C
Momentum Score	C
VGM Score	A

As an investor, you want to buy stocks with the highest probability of success. That means buying stocks with a Zacks Recommendation of Outperform, which also has a Style Score of an A or a B.

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

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

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

4-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 20 trading days or past 4 weeks. This is a medium-term price change metric and an indication of the stock gaining momentum.

12-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change of a stock's closing price over the last 60 trading days or past 12 weeks. Similar to 4-week price change, this is a medium-term price change metric. It shows whether a stock has been enjoying strong investor demand, or if it has been in consolidation, or distress over this period.

52-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 260 trading days or past 52 weeks. This long-term price change metric is a good reference point for investors. Some investors seek stocks with the best percentage price change over the last 52 weeks, expecting the momentum to continue.

Market Cap: The number of outstanding common shares of a company times its latest price per share. This figure represents a company's size, which indicates various characteristics, including price stability and risk, in which investors could be interested.

Year-To-Date Price Change: Change in a stock's daily closing price in the period of time beginning the first day of the current calendar year through to the previous trading day.

of Analysts: Number of EPS estimates used in calculating the current-quarter consensus. These estimates come from the brokerage analysts tracking this stock. However, the number of such analysts tracking this stock may not match the number of estimates, as all brokerage analysts may not come up with an estimate or provide it to us.

Beta: A measure of risk commonly used to compare the volatility of a stock to the overall market. The S&P 500 Index is the base for calculating beta and carries a value of 1. A stock with beta below 1 is less risky than the market as a whole. And a stock with beta above 1 is riskier.

Dividend: The portion of earnings a company is expected to distribute to its common shareholders in the next 12 months for each share they own. Dividends are usually paid quarterly. Dividend payments reflect positively on a company and help maintain investors' trust. Investors typically find dividend-paying stocks appealing because the dividend adds to any market price appreciation to result in higher return on investment (ROI). Moreover, a steady or increasing dividend payment provides investors a cushion in a down market.

Dividend Yield: The ratio of a company's annual dividend to its share price. The annual dividend used in the ratio is calculated based on the most recent dividend paid by the company. Dividend yield is an estimate of the dividend-only return from a stock in the next 12 months. Since dividend itself doesn't change frequently, dividend yield usually changes with a stock's price movement. As a result, often an unusually high dividend yield is a result of weak stock price.

S&P 500 Index: The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) Index is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. It is a market-capitalization-weighted index of stocks of the 500 largest U.S. companies. Each stock's weight in the index is proportionate to its market value.

Industry: One of the 250+ groups that Zacks classifies all stocks into based on the nature of business. These groups are termed as expanded (aka "X") industries and map to their respective (economic) sectors; Zacks has 16 sectors.

Zacks Industry Rank: The Zacks Industry Rank is determined by calculating the average Zacks Rank for all stocks in the industry and then assigning an ordinal rank to it. For example, an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 1.6 is better than an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 2.3. So, the industry with the better average Zacks Rank would get a better Zacks Industry Rank. If an industry has the best average Zacks Rank, it would be considered the top industry (1 out of 250+), which would place it at the top 1% of Zacks-ranked industries. Studies have shown that roughly half of a stock's price movement can be attributed to the industry group it belongs to. In fact, the top 50% of Zacks-ranked industries outperforms the bottom 50% by a factor of more than 2 to 1.

Last EPS Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported earnings per share from the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Companies with a positive earnings surprise are more likely to surprise again in the future (or miss again if they recently missed).

Last Sales Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported sales from the Zacks Consensus Estimate.

Expected Report Date: This is an estimated date of a company's next earnings release. The information originated or gathered by Zacks Investment Research from its information providers or publicly available sources is the basis of this estimate.

Earnings ESP: The Zacks Earnings ESP compares the Most Accurate Estimate to the Zacks Consensus Estimate for the yet-to-be reported quarter. The Most Accurate Estimate is the most recent version of the Zacks Consensus EPS Estimate. The idea here is that analysts revising their estimates closer to an earnings release have the latest information, which could potentially be more accurate than what they and others contributing to the consensus had predicted earlier. Thus, a positive or negative Earnings ESP reading theoretically indicates the likely deviation of the actual earnings from the consensus estimate. However, the model's predictive power is significant for positive ESP readings only. A positive Earnings ESP is a strong predictor of an earnings beat, particularly when combined with a Zacks Rank #1 (Strong Buy), #2 (Buy) or #3 (Hold). Our research shows that stocks with this combination produce a positive surprise nearly 70% of the time.

Periods:

TTM: Trailing 12 months. Using TTM figures is an effective way of analyzing the most-recent financial data in an annualized format that helps neutralize the effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variation.

F1: Current fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the ongoing full fiscal year.

F2: Next fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the next full fiscal year.

F12M: Forward 12 months. Using F12M figures is an effective way of analyzing the near-term (the following four unreported quarters) estimates in an annualized manner. Instead of typically representing estimates for the full fiscal year, which may not represent the nitty-gritty of each quarter, F12M figures suggest an all-inclusive annualized estimate for the following four quarters. The annualization helps neutralize the potential effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variations.

P/E Ratio: The price-to-earnings ratio measures a company's current market price per share relative to its earnings per share (EPS). Usually, the trailing-12-month (TTM) EPS, current-fiscal-year (F1) EPS estimate, or forward-12-month (F12M) EPS estimate is used as the denominator. In essence, this ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of EPS. In other words, this ratio gives a sense of what the relative value of the company is at the already reported level of earnings or at a future level of earnings.

It is one of the most widely-used multiples for determining the value of a company and helps comparing its valuation with that of a competitor, the industry group or a benchmark.

PEG Ratio: The price/earnings to growth ratio is a stock's P/E ratio using current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by its expected EPS growth rate over the coming 3 to 5 years. This ratio essentially determines a stock's value by factoring in the company's expected earnings growth and is thus believed to provide a more complete picture than just the P/E ratio, particularly for faster-growing companies.

P/S Ratio: The price-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by trailing 12 months (TTM) sales or revenues per share. This ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of TTM sales per share. The P/S ratio is at times the only valuation metric when the company has yet to become profitable.

Cash/Price Ratio: The cash-to-price ratio or Cash Yield is calculated as cash and marketable securities per share divided by the company's current share price. Like the earnings yield, which shows the anticipated yield (or return) on a stock from earnings for each dollar invested, the cash yield does the same, with cash being the source of return instead of earnings. For example, a cash/price ratio of 0.08 suggests a return of 8% or 8 cents for every \$1 investment.

EV/EBITDA Ratio: The EV/EBITDA ratio, also known as Enterprise Multiple, is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization). Usually, trailing-12-month (TTM) or forward-12-month (F12M) EBITDA is used as the denominator.

EV/Sales Ratio: The enterprise value-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by annual sales. It is an expansion of the P/S valuation, which uses market value instead of enterprise value. The EV/Sales ratio is perceived as more accurate than P/S, in part, because the market capitalization does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/CF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-cash flow ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by the trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow. It's a measure of how long it would take to buy the entire business if you were able to use all the company's operating cash flow.

The EV/CF ratio is perceived as more accurate than the P/CF ratio, in part, because the market price does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/FCF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-free cash flow metric compares a company's enterprise value to its trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow (FCF). This metric is very similar to the EV/CF ratio, but is considered a more exact measure owing to the fact that it uses free cash flow, which subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding growth activities and payments to shareholders.

P/EBITDA Ratio: The P/EBITDA ratio is calculated as a company's per share market value divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization). This metric is very similar to the EV/EBITDA ratio, but is considered a little less exact measure as it uses market price, which does not take a company's debt into account. However, since EBITDA is often considered a proxy for cash income, the metric is used as a measure of what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of the company's cash profitability in the trailing 12 months (TTM) or forward 12 months (F12M).

P/B Ratio: The price-to-book ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by its book value (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks) per share. In short, the book value is how much a company is worth. In other words, it reflects the total value of a company's assets that its common shareholders would receive if it were to be liquidated. So, the P/B ratio indicates whether you're paying higher or lower than what would remain if the company went bankrupt immediately. Investors typically use this metric to determine how a company's stock price stacks up to its intrinsic value.

P/TB Ratio: The price-to-tangible-book value ratio is calculated as 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.