

## TELUS Corporation (TU)

**\$17.42** (As of 07/20/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$18.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

**Zacks Recommendation:**
**Neutral**

(Since: 05/10/20)

Prior Recommendation: Underperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

**Zacks Rank:** (1-5)

**2-Buy**

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:B

Value: B

Growth: C

Momentum: C

### Summary

TELUS is positioned to benefit from increasing penetration of smart devices, wireless data services as well as wireline fiber-optic networks. The company expects growth in its wireless and wireline business backed by investments in broadband technology. TELUS' 4G LTE network covers 99% of the country's population. The addition of the 600 MHz spectrum will help increase TELUS' network capacity. TELUS International and TELUS Health are also likely to contribute to overall growth. However, a huge capital outlay and a debt-laden balance sheet are denting its profitability. Investments in broadband infrastructure have led to a substantial outflow of funds. Its margins continue to be strained as cable TV operators are transitioning from phone services based on the 'circuit-switched' technology to Voice over Internet Protocol.

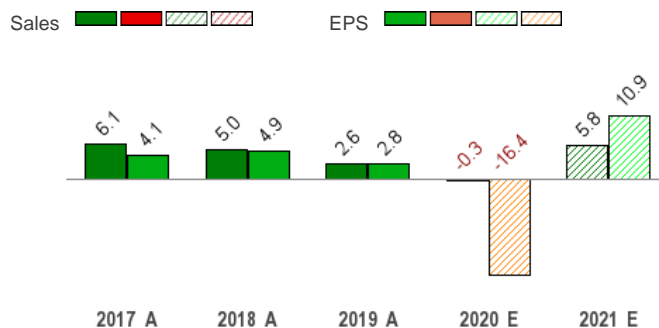
### Price, Consensus & Surprise



### Data Overview

52 Week High-Low	<b>\$20.91 - \$13.54</b>
20 Day Average Volume (sh)	<b>1,209,318</b>
Market Cap	<b>\$22.3 B</b>
YTD Price Change	<b>-10.0%</b>
Beta	<b>0.69</b>
Dividend / Div Yld	<b>\$0.85 / 4.9%</b>
Industry	<b><a href="#">Diversified Communication Services</a></b>
Zacks Industry Rank	<b>Top 21% (54 out of 252)</b>

### Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	<b>-4.0%</b>
Last Sales Surprise	<b>4.6%</b>
EPS F1 Est- 4 week change	<b>0.3%</b>
Expected Report Date	<b>08/07/2020</b>
Earnings ESP	<b>-5.3%</b>
P/E TTM	<b>9.4</b>
P/E F1	<b>18.9</b>
PEG F1	<b>2.4</b>
P/S TTM	<b>2.0</b>

### Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021					11,654 E
2020	2,754 A	2,614 E	2,768 E	2,811 E	11,015 E
2019	2,637 A	2,752 A	2,800 A	2,923 A	11,046 A

### EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	\$0.22 E	\$0.23 E	\$0.26 E	\$0.22 E	\$1.02 E
2020	\$0.24 A	\$0.21 E	\$0.25 E	\$0.22 E	\$0.92 E
2019	\$0.28 A	\$0.27 A	\$0.29 A	\$0.25 A	\$1.10 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 07/20/2020. The reports text is as of 07/21/2020.

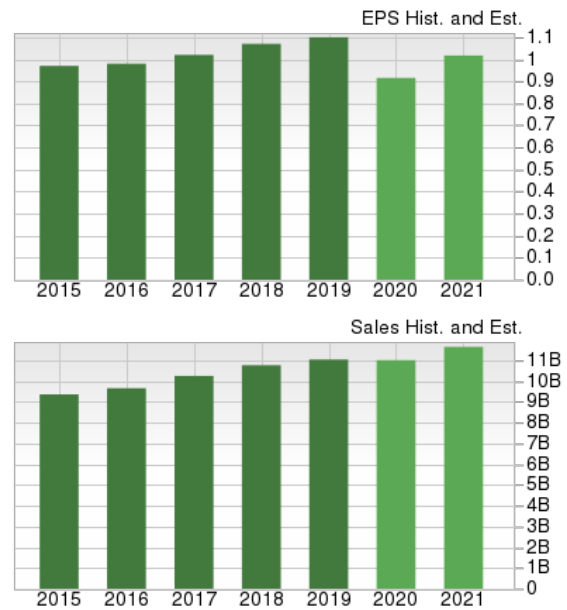
## Overview

TELUS Corporation is a leading Canadian telecom service provider based in Burnaby, British Columbia (with executive offices in Vancouver). The company is one of the largest telecom carriers in Canada (the largest in western Canada), covering 95% of the country's population. TELUS provides wireless, wireline, and Internet communications services for voice and data to businesses and consumers. The company operates as the incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) in British Columbia, Alberta and parts of Quebec.

The company achieved a strong foothold in the Canadian healthcare telecom market through its acquisition of Emergis, a business process outsourcer specializing in healthcare and financial services. This acquisition strengthened TELUS' industry solutions for healthcare and financial services. Furthermore, the acquisition of Toronto-based Fastvibe Corporation, a leading provider of innovative and superior quality web streaming solutions for businesses, has added a unique technical, event and production web management capability to the company's expertise.

TELUS reports operating results in two segments, namely, TELUS Wireline and TELUS Wireless. Following is a snapshot of the company's operating segments:

- **TELUS Wireline** (49.7% of total operating revenues in first-quarter 2020): Offers voice services (local, long distance and call management), data, Internet (high-speed, dial-up and entertainment), video (TELUS TV) and other services to consumers and businesses. The company provides hosting and infrastructure solutions and managed solutions (business security) as well as converged data and voice services. TELUS' data solutions include IP networks, private line, network management and hosting services.
- **TELUS Wireless** (50.3%): Offers digital wireless voice, data and Internet services on its high-speed network. Digital voice services include PCS postpaid, PCS prepaid and push-to-talk services while Internet and data services cover TELUS Mobile TV, TELUS Mobile Radio, TELUS Mobile Music, web browsing, Windows Live Messenger, social networking and messaging services.



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## Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ TELUS is positioned to benefit from increasing penetration of smart devices, wireless data services and wireline fiber optic networks. The Canadian telecommunications company expects balanced growth in its wireless and wireline businesses backed by investments in high-speed broadband technology. It intends to invest C\$175 million in networks across Quebec. TELUS secured new 600 MHz spectrum licenses in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec for \$931 million. Equating to a national average of 11.3 MHz, these licenses will allow it to provide better mobile broadband connectivity at a time when the industry is moving from 4G LTE to 5G. The deployment of this spectrum is important to TELUS' 5G growth strategy along with network quality, speed and coverage. The 600 MHz band can travel distances in rural areas and penetrate barriers to reach in-building locations.
- ▲ TELUS and its global unit, TELUS International, acquired Competence Call Center (CCC). TELUS International currently holds a 100% interest in CCC. The combined business has an expanded portfolio of customer experience, digital transformation, content moderation, IT lifecycle, advisory and digital consulting, risk management, and back-office support that will enable new go-to-market opportunities and drive growth. The acquisition is likely to add significant scale to TELUS International, an important and differentiated growth driver for the company, and will support TELUS' consolidated financial and operating results including revenues, EBITDA and free cash flow growth.
- ▲ TELUS' 4G LTE network covers 99% of the country's population and the addition of 600 MHz spectrum will help it increase urban capacity, while expanding the rural availability of wireless broadband service. It has made more than C\$6 billion spectrum-related investments since 2008 and C\$54 billion in technology across the country since 2000. The company is focused on execution of its strategies along with amplifying efforts on cost efficiency for margin-accretive customer growth and investments to support its expansion strategy. With the expansion of Internet of Things marketplace across Canada, TELUS is focusing to consolidate its foothold in the market. It has introduced the TELUS Global IoT Connectivity platform to deliver seamless connectivity and simplified billing across 200 networks globally, supporting the expansion of Canadian business enterprises.
- ▲ Between 2013 and 2021, TELUS intends to invest more than C\$300 million to expand its PureFibre network in the eastern part of Quebec, with C\$72 million in support from the federal and provincial governments. In the next two years, it aims to offer direct fiber access to 93% of Greater Quebec City and Eastern Quebec residents. The company plans to generate subscriber growth in its key growth segments, including wireless, high-speed Internet and TELUS TV. Increasing demand for reliable access and fast-data services are expected to support customer additions. Furthermore, TELUS International and TELUS Health are likely to contribute to the company's growth, organically and from acquisitions.

TELUS expects balanced growth in the wireless and wireline businesses supported by healthy investments in high-speed broadband technology.

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## Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ Efforts to offset capital expenditure for upgrading the network infrastructure by raising fees have reduced demand for TELUS' legacy voice and data services. Moreover, the company's huge debts are worrisome. As of Mar 31, 2020, it had \$789 million in cash and cash equivalents with \$13,336 million of long-term debt compared with the respective tallies of \$403 million and \$12,918 million at the end of the previous quarter. TELUS currently has a debt-to-capital ratio of 0.59 compared with 0.67 of the sub-industry. The times interest earned (TIE) ratio has decreased over the past quarters to 3.8 at present relative to 1.1 of the sub-industry. This indicates that the company is less likely to meet its debt obligations. However, TELUS has a dividend payout rate of 82% compared with 72.2% of the sub-industry. The rate has also increased steadily over the past quarters. It is to be seen whether TELUS can turn the tables in the coming days despite disruptions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▼ TELUS faces strong wireless competition from Rogers Communications and Bell. An intensifying competitive environment arising from small regional carriers like MTS in Manitoba and SaskTel in Saskatchewan raise concerns. Such competitive pressure has resulted in reduced subscriber additions for the company. Also, Shaw Communications' decision to venture into the Canadian wireless market with the WIND Mobile acquisition has raised competition for TELUS.
- ▼ On the wireline business, competition has increased with cable TV operators moving from offering phone services based on 'circuit-switched' technology to less costly Voice-over-Internet Protocol. Capital expenditure in the wireline segment includes significant investments in broadband infrastructure to bring in more business and residential customers directly under fiber optic cable. This has resulted in substantial outflow of funds, leading to soft margins.

TELUS continues to face intense competition in wireless as well as in traditional telephony, and from VoIP-focused competitors in both consumer and business markets.

## Last Earnings Report

### TELUS Q1 Earnings Miss Estimates, Revenues Rise Y/Y

TELUS reported mixed first-quarter 2020 results, with the top line beating the Zacks Consensus Estimate and the bottom line missing the same.

#### Net Income

Net income in the March quarter decreased 18.2% year over year to C\$350 million or C\$0.28 per share, as EBITDA growth was more than offset by higher depreciation and amortization due to growth in the company's capital assets from recent acquisitions, including Competence Call Center (CCC) and ADT Canada, as well as ongoing investments to support the expansion of its broadband footprint. First-quarter adjusted net income was C\$400 million or C\$0.32 per share (\$298.2 million or 24 cents per share) compared with C\$453 million or C\$0.38 per share in the year-ago quarter. The bottom line missed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by a penny.

#### Revenues

Quarterly total operating revenues increased 5.4% year over year to C\$3,694 million (\$2,754 million), reflecting the company's leadership in broadband network and excellent customer service. The top line surpassed the consensus estimate of \$2,632 million.

#### Segment Results

Operating revenues in **TELUS Wireless** slipped 2% year over year to C\$1,898 million (\$1,415 million), as network revenue growth was more than offset by a decrease in equipment and other service revenues. Network revenues increased 1.3% to C\$1,511 million, reflecting 5.6% growth in the subscriber base over the last 12 months, partly offset by declining mobile phone ARPU. Equipment and other service revenues were C\$374 million, down 12.4% year over year. This reflects lower contracted volumes, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as customers reduced their shopping habits and as a significant number of physical sales channels were closed in the final weeks of March. The segment's adjusted EBITDA of C\$940 million increased 2.6% over the same period a year ago, reflecting higher network revenues driven by a larger subscriber base, higher equipment margins and savings from cost efficiency programs. Adjusted EBITDA margin was 49.5% compared with 47.4% in the year-ago quarter. Capital expenditures increased 9.6% year over year to C\$194 million.

**TELUS Wireline** operating revenues increased 14.3% year over year to C\$1,873 million (\$1,396.4 million) driven by data services revenue growth, partly offset by a decline in legacy voice services revenues. Data services revenues were C\$1,444 million, up 18.5%. This was driven by a combination of higher revenues from the company's diverse portfolio of solutions, including TELUS International customer care and business services which included contribution from the acquisition of CCC, growth in business volumes from both expanded services and customer growth. Voice service (local and long distance) revenues were C\$236 million, down 6.7%. Other service and equipment revenues were C\$98 million, remaining stable. The segment's adjusted EBITDA of C\$535 million increased 7.2% from the year-ago quarter figure. This was driven by increased contribution from TELUS International customer care, expanded services for existing customers, growth in home and business smart technology and higher Internet margins. Adjusted EBITDA margin was 28.5% compared with 30.4% in the prior-year quarter. Capital expenditures were up 0.4% year over year to C\$471 million.

#### Other Details

Overall EBITDA was C\$1,409 million, up 2.2% year over year. This reflects growth in wireline data service margins and an increased EBITDA contribution from TELUS International customer care as well as higher wireless network revenues driven by a growing subscriber base. However, the momentum was partly offset by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, mainly due to the travel restrictions and border closures mandated by various governments. Adjusted EBITDA increased 4.2% year over year to C\$1,475 million.

#### Cash Flow & Liquidity

During the first quarter of 2020, TELUS generated C\$1,177 million of cash from operating activities compared with C\$790 million in the year-ago quarter. Free cash flow for the same period increased 256.2% year over year to C\$545 million. As of Mar 31, 2020, the company had C\$1,058 million (\$746.5 million) of net cash and temporary investments with C\$17,884 million (\$12,618.5 million) of long-term debt, compared with the respective tallies of C\$535 million and C\$17,142 million at the end of the prior quarter.

#### Guidance Withdrawn

During these unprecedented times, TELUS has experienced incremental demand for some of its products and services due to physical distancing. However, the company is currently unable to predict the full range of positive and negative impacts of the crisis on its business and previously-issued guidance. As a result, TELUS has withdrawn its consolidated financial guidance for 2020. It intends to provide an update on the assumptions and guidance when it reports second quarter results at the end of July.

*Conversion rate used:*

*C\$1 = \$0.745525 (period average from Jan 1, 2020 to Mar 31, 2020)*

*C\$1 = \$0.705574 (as of Mar 31, 2020)*

Quarter Ending **03/2020**

Report Date	May 07, 2020
Sales Surprise	4.63%
EPS Surprise	-4.00%
Quarterly EPS	0.24
Annual EPS (TTM)	1.04

## Recent News

On Jul 7, 2020, TELUS announced that it is expanding its 'Internet for Good' program to people living with disabilities who receive financial disability assistance from the provincial governments in British Columbia and Alberta. Under this program, the company provides high-speed broadband Internet at home for C\$9.95 a month.

On Jun 18, TELUS announced that it is launching the first wave of its 5G network in Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton and the Greater Toronto Area. The company will expand to an additional 26 markets in Canada throughout the remainder of this year.

On Jun 2, TELUS announced that it has selected telecommunications equipment from Nokia and Ericsson to deploy 5G services across its network. Notably, another Canadian carrier BCE also snubbed China-based telecom equipment provider, Huawei, in favor of these Nordic firms as relations between Canada and China turned sour with a go-ahead in the extradition case of Meng Wanzhou, the CFO of Huawei.

On Apr 14, TELUS announced that as part of its C\$16-billion multiyear investment, the company will be leveraging a significant portion of its network investments to support Alberta amid the coronavirus pandemic. It will also augment its high-speed Internet networks to 282,000 homes and businesses across the remote areas of the Canadian province. The company also stated that it will re-allocate its 2020 capital expenditure with the investments originally targeted for 2021, thereby bringing its total network investments to almost C\$3.5 billion in Alberta.

On Apr 6, TELUS announced that it has collaborated with local school boards across British Columbia to offer its 'Internet for Good' services to students in need. The move underscores TELUS' commitment toward keeping people safe and connected during these struggling times. The company provides more than 100,000 low-income British Columbian families with access to the Internet and digital literacy training tools.

## Valuation

TELUS shares are down 4.6% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Utilities sector are down 20.4% and 9.9% over the past year, respectively.

The S&P 500 Index is up 8.7% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 8.52X trailing 12-month EV/EBITDA, which compares to 12.69X for the Zacks sub-industry, 18.46X for the Zacks sector and 11.98X for the S&P 500 Index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 9.52X and as low as 6.86X, with a 5-year median of 8.33X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in line with the market. Our \$18 price target reflects 1X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for TU

Valuation Multiples - TU					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	8.52	12.69	18.46	11.98
	5-Year High	9.52	14.34	20.87	12.86
	5-Year Low	6.86	6.88	10.59	8.25
	5-Year Median	8.33	11.16	13.79	10.88
P/E F12M	Current	17.93	11.92	12.76	22.83
	5-Year High	21.49	17.46	15.32	22.83
	5-Year Low	12.2	10.04	11.4	15.25
	5-Year Median	15.93	14.82	13.78	17.52
P/S F12M	Current	1.96	1.15	2.73	3.58
	5-Year High	2.2	3.93	3.29	3.58
	5-Year Low	1.47	1.05	1.75	2.53
	5-Year Median	1.94	1.29	2.06	3.02

As of 07/20/2020

## Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 21% (54 out of 252)



## Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Swisscom AG (SCMWY)	Outperform	2
Telstra Corp. (TLSYY)	Outperform	2
BCE, Inc. (BCE)	Neutral	3
Deutsche Telekom AG (DEGTY)	Neutral	2
Shenandoah Telecommunications Co (SHEN)	Neutral	3
Telefonica SA (TEF)	Neutral	2
Telenor ASA (TELNY)	Neutral	3
VEON Ltd. (VEON)	Neutral	2

Industry Comparison Industry: Diversified Communication Services				Industry Peers		
	TU	X Industry	S&P 500	BCE	DEGTY	TEF
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	2	-	-	3	2	2
VGM Score	B	-	-	C	A	B
Market Cap	22.26 B	9.50 B	22.29 B	37.86 B	84.18 B	24.87 B
# of Analysts	7	3	14	7	2	3
Dividend Yield	4.86%	1.89%	1.85%	5.85%	3.67%	6.30%
Value Score	B	-	-	B	A	A
Cash/Price	0.04	0.08	0.06	0.05	0.10	0.39
EV/EBITDA	8.32	6.50	13.06	7.74	5.02	11.11
PEG Ratio	2.37	2.84	2.98	4.09	2.29	0.47
Price/Book (P/B)	2.28	2.23	3.12	2.61	1.66	1.05
Price/Cash Flow (P/CF)	6.45	5.61	12.03	6.52	3.38	6.21
P/E (F1)	18.93	18.57	22.15	18.57	15.93	9.71
Price/Sales (P/S)	1.98	1.27	2.35	2.11	0.94	0.47
Earnings Yield	5.28%	5.38%	4.30%	5.38%	6.28%	10.23%
Debt/Equity	1.37	1.29	0.75	1.31	1.58	2.25
Cash Flow (\$/share)	2.70	2.32	6.94	6.42	5.23	0.77
Growth Score	C	-	-	C	C	D
Hist. EPS Growth (3-5 yrs)	2.23%	1.05%	10.82%	0.21%	10.45%	0.99%
Proj. EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-16.75%	-0.88%	-9.08%	-14.61%	2.78%	-32.42%
Curr. Cash Flow Growth	7.95%	0.87%	5.51%	5.00%	14.82%	-28.39%
Hist. Cash Flow Growth (3-5 yrs)	2.83%	0.12%	8.55%	2.41%	7.59%	-4.61%
Current Ratio	0.90	0.88	1.30	0.88	0.74	0.79
Debt/Capital	57.83%	55.71%	44.41%	52.13%	61.19%	69.25%
Net Margin	11.25%	7.57%	10.54%	12.63%	4.80%	1.32%
Return on Equity	14.94%	11.51%	15.74%	18.24%	10.40%	13.32%
Sales/Assets	0.39	0.44	0.54	0.39	0.47	0.40
Proj. Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-0.88%	-0.36%	-2.36%	-7.80%	27.47%	-9.47%
Momentum Score	C	-	-	F	D	C
Daily Price Chg	-0.85%	0.00%	-0.77%	-1.37%	0.63%	1.27%
1 Week Price Chg	5.34%	0.16%	3.82%	4.58%	3.72%	3.05%
4 Week Price Chg	0.46%	0.73%	2.71%	-1.27%	7.09%	-0.62%
12 Week Price Chg	7.66%	9.03%	9.79%	3.05%	25.79%	8.86%
52 Week Price Chg	-4.55%	-7.46%	-3.79%	-8.32%	7.77%	-40.94%
20 Day Average Volume	1,209,318	64,176	2,095,914	1,168,800	181,480	870,723
(F1) EPS Est 1 week change	0.16%	0.00%	0.00%	-0.69%	0.00%	1.37%
(F1) EPS Est 4 week change	0.31%	0.00%	0.09%	-1.44%	0.00%	1.37%
(F1) EPS Est 12 week change	5.17%	-1.29%	-4.60%	-6.85%	15.03%	-20.00%
(Q1) EPS Est Mthly Chg	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.18%	NA	NA



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## Zacks Stock Rating System

We offer two rating systems that take into account investors' holding horizons: Zacks Rank and Zacks Recommendation. Each provides valuable insights into the future profitability of the stock and can be used separately or in combination with each other depending on your investment style.

### Zacks Recommendation

The Zacks Recommendation aims to predict performance over the next 6 to 12 months. The foundation for the quantitatively determined Zacks Recommendation is trends in the company's estimate revisions and earnings outlook. The Zacks Recommendation is broken down into 3 Levels; Outperform, Neutral and Underperform. Unlike many Wall Street firms, we have an excellent balance between the number of Outperform and Neutral recommendations. Our team of 70 analysts are fully versed in the benefits of earnings estimate revisions and how that is harnessed through the Zacks quantitative rating system. But we have given our analysts the ability to override the Zacks Recommendation for the 1200 stocks that they follow. The reason for the analyst over-rides is that there are often factors such as valuation, industry conditions and management effectiveness that a trained investment professional can spot better than a quantitative model.

### Zacks Rank

The Zacks Rank is our short-term rating system that is most effective over the one- to three-month holding horizon. The underlying driver for the quantitatively-determined Zacks Rank is the same as the Zacks Recommendation, and reflects trends in earnings estimate revisions.

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### 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	<b>B</b>
Growth Score	<b>C</b>
Momentum Score	<b>C</b>
VGM Score	<b>B</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.

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