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Apr 03, 2020

United Rentals, Inc. (URI)

$96.16 (As of 04/02/20)

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

Long Term: 6-12 Months	**Zacks Recommendation:** (Since: 02/27/20) Prior Recommendation: Outperform	**Neutral**
Short Term: 1-3 Months	**Zacks Rank:** (1-5) Zacks Style Scores: Value: B | Growth: B	**3-Hold** VGM:A Momentum: C

Summary

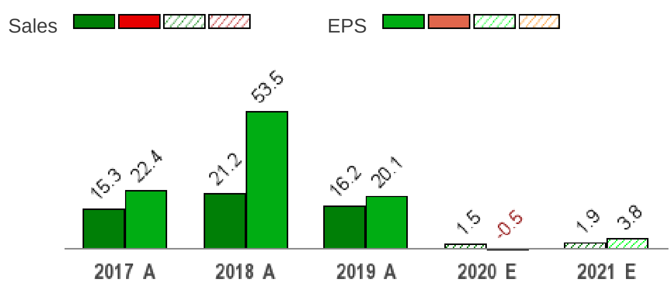
Shares of United Rentals have outperformed the industry in the past six-month period. The company is poised to benefit from diversified product offerings and end-market mix. It is registering broad-based growth and higher rental revenues/rates across the regions served, given Project XL initiatives, prudent investments in fleet, accretive acquisitions, along with robust end-market demand. Its focus on expanding geographic borders and product portfolio through acquisitions and joint ventures is also commendable. However, fleet productivity is witnessing a downfall due to time utilization issues. Margins also remain under pressure owing to absorption of higher rental operating costs in a slower growth environment and increase in lower-margin used equipment sales.

Price, Consensus & Surprise

Data Overview

52 Week High-Low	**$170.04 - $58.85**
20 Day Average Volume (sh)	**2,687,455**
Market Cap	**$7.1 B**
YTD Price Change	**-42.3%**
Beta	**2.33**
Dividend / Div Yld	**$0.00 / 0.0%**
Industry	**Building Products - Miscellaneous**
Zacks Industry Rank	**Top 26% (66 out of 254)**
Last EPS Surprise	**5.3%**
Last Sales Surprise	**2.7%**
EPS F1 Est- 4 week change	**-5.1%**
Expected Report Date	**04/29/2020**
Earnings ESP	**-8.4%**
P/E TTM	**4.9**
P/E F1	**5.0**
PEG F1	**0.3**
P/S TTM	**0.8**

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Sales Estimates (millions of $)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	2,167 E	2,404 E	2,607 E	2,552 E	9,666 E
2020	2,140 E	2,346 E	2,553 E	2,547 E	9,487 E
2019	2,117 A	2,290 A	2,488 A	2,456 A	9,351 A

EPS Estimates

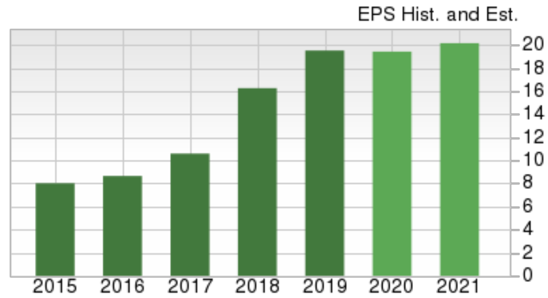
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	$2.84 E	$4.74 E	$5.83 E	$5.49 E	$20.16 E
2020	$3.20 E	$4.78 E	$6.17 E	$5.78 E	$19.43 E
2019	$3.31 A	$4.74 A	$5.96 A	$5.60 A	$19.52 A

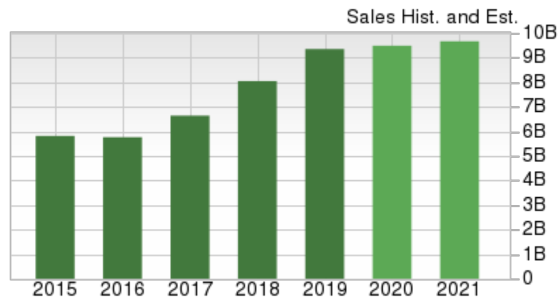
*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 04/02/2020. The reports text is as of 04/03/2020.

Overview

Headquartered in Stamford, CT, **United Rentals, Inc.** is the largest equipment rental company in the world, with an integrated network of 1,175 rental locations in North America and 11 in Europe. Moreover, it operates in 49 states and every Canadian province. The company offers approximately 4,000 classes of equipment for rent at a total original equipment cost ("OEC") of $14.63 billion. Equipment rentals had represented 85% of its total revenues in 2019. The company's customer base includes construction and industrial companies, utilities, municipalities, government agencies, independent contractors and homeowners and other individuals that use equipment for projects that range from simple repairs to major renovations. The company's principal products and services are equipment rental, sale of rental equipment, new equipment, contractor supplies, services and other.





United Rentals serves its customers as a single-source solution, provided through two business segments: General Rentals and Trench, Power and Fluid Solutions.

General Rentals (accounted for 79.5% of total revenues in 2019) includes the rental of construction, aerial and industrial equipment, general tools and light equipment, along with related services and activities. The segment includes the rental of the following: i) general construction and industrial equipment ii) aerial work platforms and iii) general tools and light equipment. The general rentals segment caters to 11 geographic regions — Carolinas, Gulf South, Industrial (which serves the geographic Gulf region and has a strong industrial presence), Mid-Atlantic, Mid Central, Midwest, Northeast, Pacific West, South, Southeast and Western Canada — and operates throughout the United States and Canada.

Trench, Power and Fluid Solutions (20.5%) includes the rental of specialty construction products and related services like trench safety equipment, power and HVAC equipment and fluid solutions equipment.

Reasons To Buy:

Prudent investments in fleet, accretive acquisitions and robust market demand support United Rentals' growth

▲ **Impressive Earnings Surprise Trend & Solid ROE**: The company has an impressive earnings and revenue surprise trend. Its earnings surpassed expectations in each of the last eight quarters. The company topped revenue estimates in the trailing 11 quarters. Positive construction market outlook and recent acquisitions are expected to boost its growth in the upcoming quarters. The company ended 2019 on a solid note. Overall business conditions were healthy during the said period, with broad-based growth across its geographies and verticals.

United Rentals' trailing 12-month return on equity (ROE) is indicative of growth potential. The company's ROE of 42.3% compares favorably with the industry's 11.5%, which signals efficiency in using its shareholders' funds compared with its peers.

▲ **End-Market Demand Solid**: United Rentals serves the following three principal end markets for equipment rental in North America — industrial and other non-construction, commercial construction, and residential construction. In 2019, equipment rentals represented 85.2% of the company's total revenues. Overall construction market scenario remained positive through 2019 and the company is upbeat about 2020 as well, given improved demand condition in construction end-markets served. Infrastructure, especially transportation, and power are major tailwinds. End-market demand was broad based, with strength in both the United States and Canada. United Rentals have been registering volume and rental rate growth over the last few quarters.

In 2020, the company expects the majority of its end markets to continue experiencing solid demand for equipment rental services. Meanwhile, demand for United Rentals services and products are sensitive to the level of exploration, development and production activity of oil and natural gas companies. With a substantial part of the company's revenues coming in from the energy sector, United Rentals is well poised to benefit from any improvement in energy sector activity in the months ahead. Although continued weakness in the upstream business was observed throughout 2019, downstream or midstream businesses are still quite strong.

▲ **Expansion Via Acquisitions Lends a Leading Market Position**: United Rentals is expanding geographic borders and product portfolio through acquisitions, and joint ventures. As the largest equipment rental company in the world, United Rentals enjoys strong brand recognition, which enables it to draw customers and build customer loyalty. The company offers approximately 4,000 classes of rental equipment for rent on an hourly, daily, weekly or monthly basis. On Nov 30, 2018, the company announced the acquisition of WesternOne Rentals & Sales LP, a leading regional equipment rental provider in Western Canada. The acquisition helped United Rentals to expand services to Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba.

Meanwhile, the BlueLine acquisition in October 2018 continues to remain significant as it is boosting United Rentals' capacity across the largest metropolitan areas in North America, including both the U.S. coasts, the Gulf South and Ontario. The buyout generated approximately $6 million of cost synergies in fourth-quarter 2019. It will likely realize approximately $15 million of fleet and other procurement savings based on the combined spending, going forward.

Other noteworthy acquisitions in 2018 have been BakerCorp and assets of Industrial Rental Services. In 2017, the company acquired Neff Corporation and NES Rentals.

▲ **Large & Diverse Rental Fleet, Focus on Specialty**: United Rentals' extensive and diverse fleet allows it to serve large customers that require a wide range of equipment. The company's rental fleet is the largest and most comprehensive in the industry. It manages its rental fleet through a life-cycle approach that focuses on satisfying customer demand and optimizing utilization levels. As part of this approach, the company closely monitors repairs and maintenance expenses and can anticipate, the optimum time to dispose of an asset. As of Dec 31, 2019, the size of the rental fleet was $14.6 billion of original equipment cost (OEC) compared with $14.2 billion on Dec 31, 2018.

Meanwhile, via increasing the mix of Specialty (which includes higher-margin trench, power and fluid solutions) in the portfolio, the company will be able to hold onto much of the margin improvement. Over the past five years, Specialty's contribution has increased from less than 7% to nearly 27% of its pro-forma revenues. United Rentals now offers a wide range of products to a diverse group of customers and geographies that dampen cyclicality of the construction market.

▲ **Robust Technology and Digital Capabilities**: United Rentals offers an extended digital service — including telematics, digital fleet management, and online training services. Beside attracting new customers, the digital services simplified user experience while increasing billing visibility. It also facilitates value for rental customers and lends a competitive edge to the company.

Reasons To Sell:

> Economic uncertainty, higher operating costs, and a highly fragmented and competitive equipment rental industry might mar its prospects

- **Economic Uncertainty & Slowdown in Upstream Business**: In the quarters ahead, United Rentals' business could get affected by economic uncertainty that may in turn impact construction and industrial activities. Notably, the company's top line was hurt in 2019, particularly due to slowdown in upstream oil and gas. In fact, industrial revenues in 2019 were flat year over year due to these headwinds. Management expects the situation to persist in 2020 as well.

- **Higher Cost & Competitive Pressure**: Ongoing higher fuel costs and steel prices mar the company's prospects. Also, labor shortages are a problem. In 2019, costs of equipment rentals (excluding depreciation) increased 19.6% year over year.

  United Rentals incurred higher operating costs in 2019, primarily related to repairs and maintenance of the fleet, including higher delivery costs for transfer of equipment from one facility to another. Its 2019 adjusted EBITDA margin (on a pro-forma basis) contracted 140 basis points (bps) year over year.

  Meanwhile, the equipment rental industry is highly fragmented and competitive. United Rentals' competitors include small, independent businesses, regional competitors, public companies, and equipment vendors and dealers who sell and rent equipment directly to customers. Competitive pressure could affect revenues and operating results by decreasing rental volumes, impacting prices the company charges or increasing costs to retain employees.

- **Acquisitions Costs Pressurize Near-Term Margins**: While relentless acquisition is slated to bring long-term growth for United Rentals, those have been a drag on the company's margins recently. Lower adjusted EBITDA margin in 2019 was largely due to the impact of BlueLine and Baker buyouts. Meanwhile, it expects to invest more in such companies in 2020, which may further increase cost burden.

- **Energy Sector Volatility**: Demand for United Rentals' services and products are sensitive to the level of exploration, development and production activity of oil and natural gas companies. The level of exploration, development and production activity is directly affected by trends in oil and natural gas prices, which historically have been volatile and are likely to continue to be so.

  Prices for oil and natural gas are subject to fluctuations in response to relatively minor changes in the supply and demand for oil and natural gas, market uncertainty, and a variety of other economic factors. Any prolonged reduction in oil and natural gas prices will depress the immediate levels of exploration, development and production activity, which could have an adverse effect on United Rentals' business, results of operations and financial condition.

Last Earnings Report

United Rentals Q4 Earnings & Revenues Top, Margin Down

Quarter Ending	12/2019
Report Date	Jan 29, 2020
Sales Surprise	2.71%
EPS Surprise	5.26%
Quarterly EPS	5.60
Annual EPS (TTM)	19.61

United Rentals, Inc. reported better-than-expected results in fourth-quarter 2019. Earnings and revenues beat the respective Zacks Consensus Estimate, and grew on a year-over-year basis. The company witnessed improved demand in construction end-markets served, partly offset by slower industrial growth.

Markedly, it provided strong full-year 2020 guidance. United Rentals remains upbeat about 2020 and expects higher free cash flow generation, considering these market dynamics.

Inside the Headlines

Adjusted earnings of $5.60 per share topped the consensus estimate of $5.32 by 5.3% and increased 15.5% from the prior-year figure of $4.85. Total revenues of $2.456 billion surpassed the consensus mark of $2.391 billion by 2.7%. Moreover, revenues rose 6.5% year over year.

Rental revenues (including revenues from owned equipment rental, re-rent and ancillary) rose 3.7% (increasing 0.8% on a pro-forma basis) from the year-ago quarter to $2.062 billion.

The upside was supported by solid impact of acquisitions and growth in construction end markets served by the company. However, the upside was partly offset by challenges in industrial verticals.

Fleet productivity was down 2.4% year over year in the quarter. On a pro-forma basis, fleet productivity declined 1.8% from the prior-year quarter, owing to lower time utilization.

Segment Discussion

General Rentals: Segment equipment rentals' revenues inched up 2.4% year over year to $1.61 billion. However, rental gross margin contracted 430 basis points (bps) year over year to 39.9%, owing to increased depreciation of rental equipment as a result of the BlueLine acquisition, and higher operating costs due to repair and maintenance works.

Trench, Power and Fluid Solutions: Segmental rental revenues increased 8.7% year over year to $452 million. However, rentals gross margin declined 140 bps on a year-over-year basis to 43.8% due to higher acquisition-related costs.

Margins

The company's total equipment rentals gross margin dropped 760 bps year over year to 36.5%. Adjusted gross margin also contracted 770 bps to 43.4% due to changes in the mix of equipment sold, channel mix and pricing.

Nevertheless, adjusted EBITDA increased 3.3% from the prior-year quarter to $1.154 billion. However, adjusted EBITDA margin contracted 140 bps to 47% in the quarter, owing to absorption of higher rental operating costs in a slower-growth environment, including costs related to repair and maintenance of fleet in upstream oil and gas markets, and increase in lower-margin used equipment sales, partially offset by lower SG&A.

Balance Sheet

United Rentals had cash and cash equivalents of $52 million as of Dec 31, 2019 compared with $43 million at 2018-end.

In the quarter, the company generated $442 million as net cash from operating activities compared with the year-ago figure of $730 million. Free cash flow was $484 million in the quarter, up 34.1% year over year.

In 2019, net cash from operating activities came in at $3.02 billion (up 6%) and free cash flow was $1.566 billion (up 23.2%).

Share Repurchase Program

In December 2019, the firm completed the previously announced share repurchase program of $1.25 billion, through which it acquired approximately 9.5 million shares.

On Jan 28, 2020, the board of directors authorized a new $500-million share repurchase program, which will start in first-quarter 2020 and is likely to be completed within 12 months.

2019 Highlights

In full-year 2019, adjusted earnings came in at $19.52 per share, up 20% from the year-ago period. Total and rental revenues also increased 16.2% and 14.8% to $9.351 billion and $7.964 billion, respectively.

Adjusted EBITDA margin contracted 140 bps to 46.6%.

2020 Guidance

Total revenues are expected in the range of $9.4-$9.8 billion. The consensus estimate for 2020 revenues is currently pegged at $9.55 billion.

Adjusted EBITDA is projected between $4.35 billion and $4.55 billion. The metric came in at $4.355 billion in 2019.

Net rental capital expenditures are projected in the range of $1.05-$1.35 billion (after gross purchases of $1.9-$2.2 billion). The figure was recorded at $1.301 billion in 2019, considering the mid-point of the guided range.

Net cash provided by operating activities is expected in the range of $2.85-$3.35 billion, pointing to an improvement from 3.024 billion reported in 2019.

Free cash flow (excluding the impact of merger and restructuring-related payments) is expected in the range of $1.6-$1.8 billion, indicating an increase from $1.592 billion reported in 2019.

Valuation

United Rentals' shares are down 42.4% in the year-to-date perod and 21.5% in the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Construction sector are down 35.3% and 35.8%, respectively, in the year-to-date period. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and sector are down 22.2% and 25%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 23.2% in the year-to-date period and 14.3% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 4.67X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 9.46X for the Zacks sub-industry, 10.58X for the Zacks sector and 15.37X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 16.57X and as low as 3.38X, with a 5-year median of 8.9X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our $101 price target reflects 4.9X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for URI.

Valuation Multiples - URI

		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	4.67	9.46	10.58	15.37
	5-Year High	16.57	17.29	18.55	19.34
	5-Year Low	3.38	7.13	10.58	15.18
	5-Year Median	8.9	13.68	15.92	17.44
P/S F12M	Current	0.74	0.76	1.25	2.7
	5-Year High	2.25	3.59	2.23	3.43
	5-Year Low	0.54	0.69	1.25	2.54
	5-Year Median	1.22	0.88	1.65	3
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	4.07	16.84	14.72	9.15
	5-Year High	10.2	30.62	22.73	12.88
	5-Year Low	3.64	14.61	13.17	8.27
	5-Year Median	5.52	23.37	19.43	10.78

As of 04/02/2020

Industry Analysis **Zacks Industry Rank:** Top 26% (66 out of 254)

Top Peers

Avis Budget Group, Inc. **(CAR)**	Neutral
Dover Corporation **(DOV)**	Neutral
W.W. Grainger, Inc. **(GWW)**	Neutral
HD Supply Holdings, Inc. **(HDS)**	Neutral
Ingersoll-Rand Inc. **(IR)**	Neutral
WillScot Corporation **(WSC)**	Neutral
C.H. Robinson Worldwide, Inc. **(CHRW)**	Underperform
Herc Holdings Inc. **(HRI)**	Underperform

Industry Comparison Industry: Building Products - Miscellaneous

Industry Peers

	URI Neutral	X Industry	S&P 500	CAR Neutral	HRI Underperform	WSC Neutral
VGM Score	A	-	-	A	A	C
Market Cap	7.12 B	594.15 M	17.16 B	783.05 M	589.90 M	1.11 B
# of Analysts	6	3	13	5	2	3
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	2.5%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Value Score	B	-	-	A	B	C
Cash/Price	0.01	0.14	0.06	0.63	0.06	0.00
EV/EBITDA	4.15	5.62	10.80	4.20	4.08	8.86
PEG Ratio	0.28	1.40	1.74	NA	4.86	1.19
Price/Book (P/B)	1.87	1.12	2.33	1.27	0.91	1.55
Price/Cash Flow (P/CF)	2.00	7.04	9.11	0.24	1.04	4.86
P/E (F1)	4.95	12.56	14.73	9.05	6.61	17.87
Price/Sales (P/S)	0.76	0.80	1.81	0.09	0.30	1.04
Earnings Yield	20.21%	7.94%	6.71%	11.01%	15.12%	5.63%
Debt/Equity	2.72	0.49	0.70	25.34	3.65	2.30
Cash Flow ($/share)	47.99	2.74	7.01	46.76	19.67	1.94
Growth Score	B	-	-	B	A	A
Hist. EPS Growth (3-5 yrs)	24.77%	20.63%	10.92%	5.91%	-30.45%	NA
Proj. EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-0.47%	6.27%	1.02%	-66.20%	-1.90%	626.67%
Curr. Cash Flow Growth	17.38%	-0.35%	5.93%	35.37%	13.52%	38.63%
Hist. Cash Flow Growth (3-5 yrs)	13.02%	16.20%	8.55%	7.65%	-3.44%	NA
Current Ratio	0.84	1.87	1.24	0.96	1.24	0.91
Debt/Capital	73.14%	39.42%	42.33%	96.20%	78.49%	69.72%
Net Margin	12.56%	4.54%	11.67%	3.29%	2.38%	-1.04%
Return on Equity	42.34%	11.50%	16.70%	60.29%	14.26%	3.63%
Sales/Assets	0.49	1.05	0.54	0.39	0.53	0.38
Proj. Sales Growth (F1/F0)	2.18%	2.18%	1.54%	-11.59%	0.00%	3.39%
Momentum Score	C	-	-	D	B	F
Daily Price Chg	0.19%	0.00%	1.45%	-12.37%	7.81%	-1.88%
1 Week Price Chg	28.60%	8.38%	12.29%	33.42%	40.22%	39.90%
4 Week Price Chg	-19.75%	-25.13%	-21.33%	-54.73%	-37.57%	-39.02%
12 Week Price Chg	-41.09%	-31.52%	-28.56%	-68.33%	-57.26%	-48.55%
52 Week Price Chg	-21.53%	-20.30%	-22.55%	-68.08%	-50.07%	-21.12%
20 Day Average Volume	2,687,455	328,990	4,257,668	6,010,029	369,394	1,522,733
(F1) EPS Est 1 week change	0.00%	0.00%	-0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
(F1) EPS Est 4 week change	-5.11%	-5.11%	-4.30%	-69.60%	-20.97%	-22.93%
(F1) EPS Est 12 week change	-5.64%	-7.16%	-5.47%	-66.83%	-30.72%	-24.76%
(Q1) EPS Est Mthly Chg	-1.62%	-8.19%	-5.91%	-263.97%	0.00%	-41.67%

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
Growth Score	B
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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