

United Rentals, Inc. (URI)

\$180.78 (As of 09/17/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$208.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation: **Outperform**

(Since: 07/14/20)

Prior Recommendation: Neutral

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

2-Buy

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:B

Value: A

Growth: C

Momentum: F

Summary

Shares of United Rentals have outperformed the industry in the past three months. The trend is likely to continue, given impressive earnings and revenues for second-quarter 2020. The company is poised to benefit from diversified product offerings, end-market mix, project XL initiatives, prudent investments in fleet, accretive acquisitions and robust end-market demand. Although coronavirus-led disruptions somewhat impacted its performance in the second quarter, the Trump administration's proposed \$1-trillion infrastructure package to kick start the country and spur economic growth seems encouraging. Its disciplined capital allocation and cost management bode well. That said, low demand for gasoline and jet fuel owing to the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to weigh on the company's near-term results.

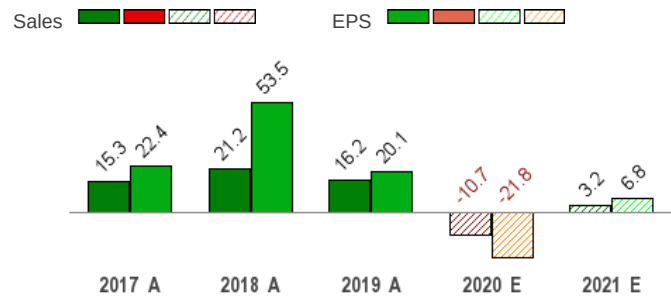
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$186.78 - \$58.85
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	684,301
Market Cap	\$13.0 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	8.4%
Beta	2.38
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Building Products - Miscellaneous
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 10% (25 out of 251)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	90.7%
Last Sales Surprise	7.0%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-0.0%
Expected Report Date	10/21/2020
Earnings ESP	0.0%
P/E TTM	9.7
P/E F1	11.9
PEG F1	1.0
P/S TTM	1.5

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	2,031 E	2,174 E	2,335 E	2,338 E	8,618 E
2020	2,125 A	1,939 A	2,133 E	2,148 E	8,348 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	\$2.82 E	\$4.05 E	\$5.09 E	\$4.83 E	\$16.30 E
2020	\$3.35 A	\$3.68 A	\$4.25 E	\$4.11 E	\$15.26 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 09/17/2020. The reports text is as of 09/18/2020.

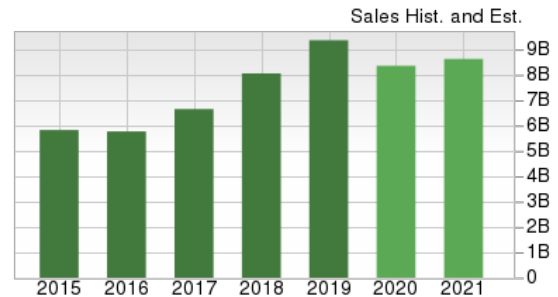
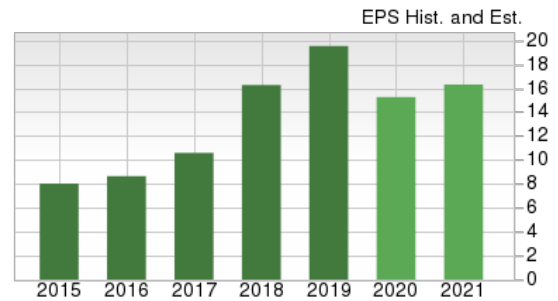
Overview

Headquartered in Stamford, CT, United Rentals, Inc. is the largest equipment rental company in the world, with an integrated network of 1,181 rental locations in North America and Europe. Moreover, it operates in 49 states and every Canadian province. The company offers 4,000 classes of equipment for rent at a total original equipment cost ("OEC") of \$14.1 billion. 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.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ **Impressive Earnings Surprise Trend & Solid ROE:** The company has an impressive earnings and revenue surprise trend. Its earnings surpassed expectations in 26 of the last 28 quarters. The company topped revenue estimates in the trailing 13 quarters. It ended first-half 2020 on a solid note. Although the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the industrial business severely, fleet on rent improved steadily, rebounding almost 14% during the second quarter. This translates to more than \$1 billion of incremental fleet on rent. Moreover, the company is currently focusing on cost-management techniques and reducing CapEx. It expects 2020 net rental capital expenditures after gross purchases in the range of \$50-\$150 million, implying a decline from \$1.3 billion in 2019. Also, free cash flow (excluding the impact of merger and restructuring-related payments) is expected in the range of \$2-\$2.2 billion, which suggests an increase from \$1.59 billion reported in 2019.

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

United Rentals' trailing 12-month return on equity (ROE) is indicative of growth potential. The company's ROE of 37.2% compares favorably with the industry's 10.8%, which signals more efficiency in using shareholders' funds than peers.

- ▲ **Solid End-Market Demand & Trump's \$1-Trillion Infrastructure Bill:** 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 the first half, equipment rentals represented almost 83% of the company's total revenues. After facing disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic, overall construction market has been rebounding. Especially, non-residential construction, including power and data center builds, remained mostly unaffected as these were deemed essential.

United Rentals has been witnessing rising demand for specialty construction products, which are significantly contributing to the trench, power and fluid solutions segment's revenues. Also, the demand for used equipments remained solid post the easing of pandemic-led restrictions.

As the FAST Act is set to expire on September 2020, the Trump administration proposed a \$1-trillion infrastructure package in June 2020 to kickstart the country and spur economic growth. Under the plan, which was made by the Department of Transportation, bulk of the money will be reserved for roads and bridges, along with 5G buildout and rural broadband infrastructure. The proposed bill will be beneficial for construction materials industry players like United Rentals.

- ▲ **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. Other noteworthy acquisitions in 2018 have been BakerCorp and assets of Industrial Rental Services.

- ▲ **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 Jun 30, 2020, the company's fleet of equipment rental had total OEC of \$14.1 billion.

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% to its pro-forma revenues. United Rentals now offers a wide range of products to a diverse group of customers and geographies that dampen cyclicity of the construction market.

- ▲ **Stable Balance Sheet:** In response to the unpredictable COVID-19 impacts, the company has been focusing on protecting liquidity and closely managing cash flows. It currently has ample liquidity to meet its future business needs. On Jun 30, it had total liquidity of \$3.823 billion, (including \$127 in cash and cash equivalents) compared with \$3.083 billion at first quarter-end.

At the end of second quarter, long-term obligations were \$9.6 billion compared with \$10.4 billion at 2019-end and \$10.7 billion at first quarter-end. Notably, it has no significant long-term debt maturities until 2025. Second-quarter free cash flow (FCF) increased almost four times to \$817 million from \$205 million a year ago. The company expects FCF to be "substantially positive" in 2020 even under worst-case scenarios.

Risks

- **Economic Uncertainty & Slowdown in Upstream Business:** In the quarters ahead, United Rentals' business might be affected by the prevailing economic uncertainty that is hurting construction and industrial activities.

During the second quarter, the company witnessed 16.2% lower rental revenue sales due to COVID-19-induced headwinds. Quarterly fleet productivity was also down 13.6% year over year due to lower rental volumes. Rental volume declined due to shelter-in-place orders and other end-market restrictions. Also, adjusted EBITDA margin contracted 50 basis points owing to higher operating costs, largely associated with COVID-19 impacts.

Notably, the company is experiencing a slowdown in industrial and upstream oil and gas operations. Management expects the situation to persist in 2020, given uncertainty in the market.

For 2020, it projects total revenues in the range of \$8.05-\$8.45 billion, indicating a decrease from \$9.35 billion in 2019. Adjusted EBITDA is projected between \$3.6 billion and \$3.8 billion, suggesting a decline from \$4.36 billion in 2019.

- **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. Again, in first-quarter 2020, the metric increased 0.7% from the prior-year quarter.

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.

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.

- **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 Q2 Earnings & Revenues Top, Down Y/Y

United Rentals, Inc. reported second-quarter 2020 results. Although earnings and revenues topped the respective Zacks Consensus Estimate, the metrics declined on a year-over-year basis, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Inside the Headlines

Adjusted earnings of \$3.68 per share topped the consensus estimate of \$1.93 by 90.7%. However, the reported figure decreased 22.4% from the prior-year figure. Total revenues of \$1.94 billion surpassed the consensus mark of \$1.81 billion by 7% but declined 15.3% year over year.

Rental revenues (including revenues from owned equipment rental, re-rent and ancillary) fell 16.2% from the year-ago quarter, mainly due to the pandemic's impact. Quarterly fleet productivity was also down 13.6% year over year due to lower rental volumes.

Used equipment sales generated \$176 million of proceeds compared with \$197 million a year ago. Adjusted gross margin of 46% contracted 320 basis points (bps) due to changes in the mix of equipment sold and pricing.

Segment Discussion

General Rentals: Segment equipment rentals' revenues fell 17.8% year over year to \$1.26 billion. Rental gross margin contracted 540 bps year over year to 33.4%, owing to increased depreciation expenses, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on revenues.

Trench, Power and Pump/Specialty: Segmental rental revenues decreased 10.6% year over year to \$387 million due to an 11.7% organic sales decline. Rental gross margin contracted 80 bps on a year-over-year basis to 46.8% due to higher operating costs and increased depreciation expenses.

Margins

The company's total equipment rentals gross margin dropped 390 bps year over year to 36.5%. Adjusted EBITDA also dropped 16.2% from the prior-year quarter to \$899 million. Adjusted EBITDA margin contracted 50 bps to 46.4%.

Balance Sheet

United Rentals had cash and cash equivalents of \$127 million as of Jun 30, 2020 compared with \$52 million at 2019-end. Total liquidity was \$3.82 billion at quarter-end.

Net leverage ratio was 2.5 as of Jun 30, 2020 compared with 2.6 at 2019-end. Notably, it has reduced total net debt by \$1.1 billion year to date. The company has no long-term debt maturities until 2025. It has repurchased \$257 million of shares under the current \$500-million repurchase program so far in 2020.

2020 Guidance Reissued

Total revenues are expected in the range of \$8.05-\$8.45 billion, indicating a decrease from \$9.35 billion in 2019. Adjusted EBITDA is projected between \$3.6 billion and \$3.8 billion, suggesting a decline from \$4.36 billion in 2019. Net rental capital expenditures after gross purchases are projected in the range of \$50-\$150 million, implying a decline from \$1.3 billion in 2019. Net cash provided by operating activities is expected in the range of \$2.25-\$2.55 billion, pointing to a decline from \$3.02 billion reported in 2019.

Free cash flow (excluding the impact of merger and restructuring-related payments) is expected in the range of \$2-\$2.2 billion, which suggests an increase from \$1.59 billion reported in 2019. Matthew Flannery, chief executive officer of United Rentals, said, "We saw a steady recovery in volume beginning in mid-April, which gave us good momentum into the start of our busy season. While visibility is still limited, near-term indicators suggest that the second half of 2020 may track to seasonal patterns in the majority of our markets."

Quarter Ending	06/2020
Report Date	Jul 29, 2020
Sales Surprise	6.97%
EPS Surprise	90.67%
Quarterly EPS	3.68
Annual EPS (TTM)	18.59

Valuation

United Rentals' shares are up 8.4% in the year-to-date period and 44.5% in the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Construction sector are up 11.7% and 6.9% in the year-to-date period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and sector are up 24% and 13.7%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 4.2% in the year-to-date period and 12.1% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 11.3X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 17.49X for the Zacks sub-industry, 17.65X for the Zacks sector and 22.15X 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 8.96X. Our Outperform recommendation indicates that the stock will perform better than the market. Our \$208 price target reflects 13X 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	11.3	17.49	17.65	22.15
	5-Year High	16.57	19.31	18.97	23.44
	5-Year Low	3.38	7.16	10.74	15.26
	5-Year Median	8.96	13.84	15.86	17.63
P/S F12M	Current	1.53	1.37	2.06	4.1
	5-Year High	2.25	3.59	2.13	4.29
	5-Year Low	0.54	0.69	1.18	3.11
	5-Year Median	1.21	0.91	1.65	3.66
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	5.37	22.1	19.2	14.51
	5-Year High	10.2	30.69	21.28	15.61
	5-Year Low	3.64	13.63	12.4	9.51
	5-Year Median	5.34	22.71	17.89	13.01

As of 09/17/2020

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 10% (25 out of 251)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
TopBuild Corp. (BLD)	Outperform	1
Masco Corporation (MAS)	Outperform	2
Owens Corning Inc (OC)	Outperform	2
Patrick Industries, Inc. (PATK)	Outperform	1
Gibraltar Industries, Inc. (ROCK)	Outperform	2
BELLWAY (BLWYY)	Neutral	2
Foundation Building Materials, Inc. (FBM)	Neutral	2
James Hardie Industries PLC. (JHX)	Neutral	3

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Building Products - Miscellaneous				Industry Peers		
	URI	X Industry	S&P 500	BLWYY	MAS	OC
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Outperform	-	-	Neutral	Outperform	Outperform
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	2	-	-	2	2	2
VGM Score	B	-	-	-	B	B
Market Cap	13.03 B	1.22 B	23.91 B	4.71 B	15.05 B	7.37 B
# of Analysts	8	3	13.5	2	8	7
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.62%	3.30%	0.94%	1.41%
Value Score	A	-	-	B	C	B
Cash/Price	0.01	0.09	0.07	0.01	0.07	0.08
EV/EBITDA	5.34	8.58	13.24	NA	13.13	8.58
PEG F1	0.99	1.75	2.97	NA	1.43	4.17
P/B	3.34	1.60	3.29	1.19	406.79	2.01
P/CF	3.77	8.58	12.82	6.70	20.13	7.76
P/E F1	11.85	20.11	21.49	10.40	21.35	17.60
P/S TTM	1.45	1.29	2.52	NA	2.17	1.08
Earnings Yield	8.44%	4.68%	4.40%	9.62%	4.67%	5.69%
Debt/Equity	2.46	0.37	0.70	NA	64.11	0.90
Cash Flow (\$/share)	47.99	2.31	6.93	5.69	2.86	8.80
Growth Score	C	-	-	A	B	C
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	26.03%	20.08%	10.41%	NA	20.08%	12.75%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-21.83%	-3.28%	-4.73%	45.35%	19.78%	-14.60%
Current Cash Flow Growth	17.38%	-3.66%	5.26%	-0.35%	-13.53%	-2.64%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	13.02%	15.36%	8.49%	NA	8.58%	13.33%
Current Ratio	0.84	2.05	1.35	5.24	1.50	1.87
Debt/Capital	71.07%	33.04%	42.95%	NA	98.46%	47.50%
Net Margin	12.37%	2.67%	10.25%	NA	19.23%	-8.79%
Return on Equity	37.16%	10.76%	14.66%	NA	-1,729.19%	11.35%
Sales/Assets	0.48	1.03	0.50	NA	1.34	0.71
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-10.72%	0.00%	-1.43%	18.30%	-11.61%	-5.69%
Momentum Score	F	-	-	-	B	D
Daily Price Change	-0.42%	-0.45%	-0.48%	0.00%	-2.57%	-0.80%
1-Week Price Change	-1.02%	0.00%	-1.87%	0.00%	3.76%	-1.38%
4-Week Price Change	3.57%	0.00%	0.96%	0.00%	-0.78%	2.55%
12-Week Price Change	25.25%	11.05%	8.69%	0.00%	18.17%	25.33%
52-Week Price Change	44.51%	4.33%	1.36%	-0.44%	40.19%	12.85%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	684,301	156,729	1,917,443	0	1,545,718	772,962
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.78%	0.00%	0.48%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	8.26%	0.00%	0.48%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	27.95%	29.01%	4.14%	2.37%	21.40%	42.74%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	NA	0.00%	0.00%

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	F
VGM Score	B

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

Disclosures

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ZIR uses the following rating system for the securities it covers. **Outperform-** ZIR expects that the subject company will outperform the broader U.S. equities markets over the next six to twelve months. **Neutral-** ZIR expects that the company will perform in line with the broader U.S. equities markets over the next six to twelve months. **Underperform-** ZIR expects the company will underperform the broader U.S. equities markets over the next six to twelve months.

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Additional Disclosure

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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.