

ExxonMobil Corporation (XOM)

\$62.65 (As of 06/09/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$66.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 05/10/21)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:A

Value: B

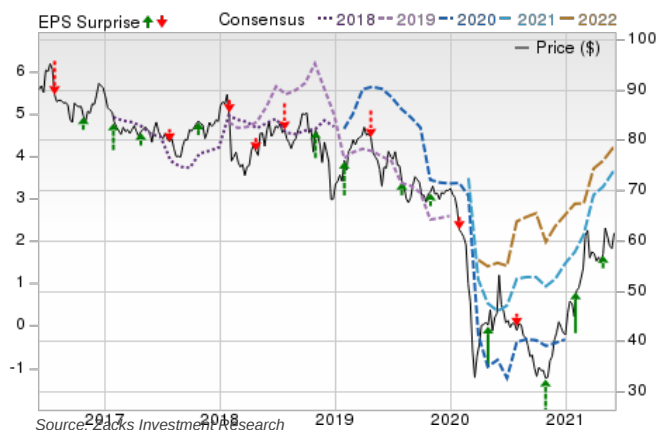
Growth: A

Momentum: A

Summary

ExxonMobil's bellwether status and an optimal integrated capital structure that has historically produced industry-leading returns, make it a relatively lower-risk energy sector play. Notably, the firm estimates gross recoverable resource of nearly 9 billion oil-equivalent barrels from its offshore Guyana discoveries, which will keep boosting its cash flows. As compared to 2019, this firm projects annual structural expense savings of \$6 billion by 2023, aiding the bottom line. Also, ExxonMobil has significantly lower debt exposure as compared to other integrated majors. However, a lower fuel margin is keeping its downstream unit under pressure. Also, the pandemic affecting major economies around the world will likely keep energy demand low. This will, in turn, hurt the company's bottom line. As such, the stock warrants a cautious stance.

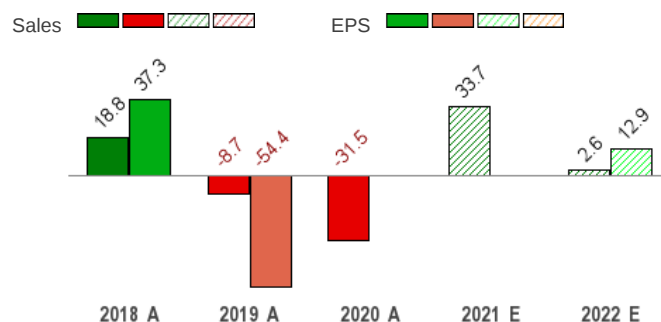
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$64.02 - \$31.11
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	22,503,524
Market Cap	\$265.2 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	52.0%
Beta	1.43
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$3.48 / 5.6%
Industry	Oil and Gas - Integrated - International
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 38% (96 out of 251)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	10.2%
Last Sales Surprise	7.2%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	3.2%
Expected Report Date	07/30/2021
Earnings ESP	21.0%
P/E TTM	NA
P/E F1	16.8
PEG F1	2.7
P/S TTM	1.4

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	61,181 E	63,399 E	64,818 E	64,970 E	248,957 E
2021	59,147 A	58,805 E	60,399 E	61,486 E	242,726 E
2020	56,158 A	32,605 A	46,199 A	46,540 A	181,502 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	\$0.99 E	\$1.05 E	\$1.14 E	\$1.08 E	\$4.21 E
2021	\$0.65 A	\$1.00 E	\$1.07 E	\$0.98 E	\$3.73 E
2020	\$0.53 A	-\$0.70 A	-\$0.18 A	\$0.03 A	-\$0.33 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 06/09/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 06/10/2021.

Overview

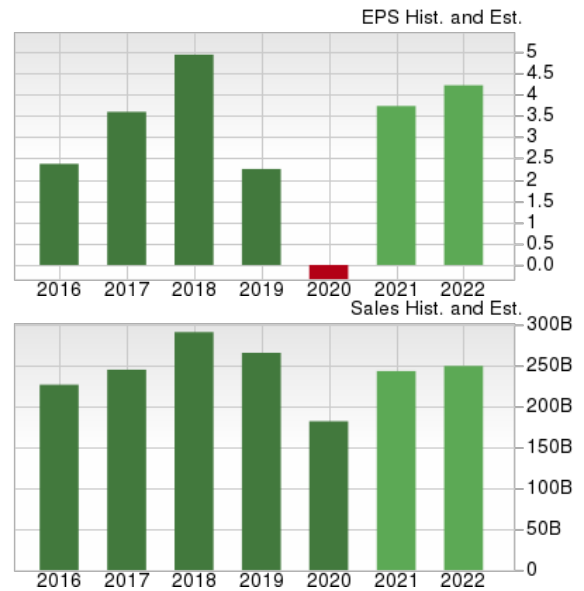
ExxonMobil's bellwether status in the energy space, optimal integrated capital structure that has historically produced industry-leading returns and management's track record of capex discipline across the commodity price cycle make it a relatively lower-risk energy sector play.

The company's upstream portfolio has not generated much production growth in 2019 and the trend isn't expected to change at least in the near term. The company nevertheless owns some of the most prolific upstream assets globally. Other aspects of the company's story include the largest global refining operations, substantial chemicals assets and a dividend history and credit profile that are second to none in the space.

As compared to other energy giants, ExxonMobil's capital spending discipline is quite aggressive. The company has a plan in place to allocate significant proportion of its budget to key oil and gas projects that include offshore Guyana resources and Permian - the most prolific shale play in the United States.

Needless to say, the company's business perspective looks different from most peers since big oil rivals have pledged to lower carbon emissions to tackle climate change. The European oil majors believe that the energy space is evolving, calling for more investment in renewables such as wind and solar. On the contrary, ExxonMobil believes that renewables alone will not be enough to meet energy demand. The company thinks the world needs more oil in the next two decades since people's standard of living is improving over time.

Irving, TX-based ExxonMobil divides its operations into three main segments: Upstream (exploration & production), Downstream (refining) and Chemical (manufacturing & marketing petrochemicals). In 2020, Upstream and Downstream units generated a loss of \$20 billion and \$1.1 billion, respectively. The Chemical segment generated a profit of \$1.9 billion in 2020.



Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ ExxonMobil's bellwether status in the energy space, an optimal integrated capital structure that has historically produced industry-leading returns, and management's track record of CAPEX discipline across the commodity price cycle make it a relatively lower-risk energy sector play. Overall, the company is not focusing aggressively on production to win back investors but instead is taking every effort to preserve shareholder's capital while lowering costs.
- ▲ The energy giant expects its capital spending for 2021 to get covered by cashflows with the assumption that Brent crude oil price will be at \$50 per barrel mark. Moreover, compared to 2019, this integrated energy firm projects annual structural expense savings of \$6 billion by 2023.
- ▲ The company made multiple world-class oil discoveries at the Stabroek Block, located off the coast of Guyana. In the block, the company estimates gross recoverable resource of more than 9 billion barrels of oil equivalent. Moreover, the firm projects daily Guyana oil production volumes of more than 800,000 gross barrels by 2025. Furthermore, daily production is expected to reach 1 million barrels by 2027. For the appraisal and development of offshore Guyana resources, the company is carrying on its activities with six rigs. Notably, the company is planning to spend \$16 billion to \$19 billion in 2021. Also, annually through 2025, the company is willing to invest \$20 billion to \$25 billion. The investments will likely get allocated to profitable growth projects that will generate significant cash flow. Importantly, the company expects to generate more than 30% returns from the investments.
- ▲ At the end of first-quarter 2021, total cash and cash equivalents were \$3.5 billion and debt amounted to \$63.3 billion. Notably, the integrated energy firm has significant lower debt exposure as compared to other integrated majors. ExxonMobil has chalked out a new plan to lower greenhouse gas emissions over the next five years after the leading integrated energy firm was recently targeted by activist investors over climate change concerns. The new 2025 targets comprise plans to cut intensity of emissions from upstream operations by 15% to 20% from 2016 levels. Over the five-year span, ExxonMobil will also reduce methane intensity by 40% to 50% and flaring intensity by 35% to 45%. The target for elimination of routine flaring in the next decade is another plan which the energy giant said will align with the initiative of World Bank.

Major discoveries in the Stabroek Block have enhanced prospects for ExxonMobil's upstream businesses.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ Unlike the S&P 500 index which evaluates the weight of the component stocks on the basis of market capitalization, the Dow Jones Industrial Average calculates the weight on the basis of share price of the components. With Apple's planned 4-to-1 stock split, the technology sector will have less weightage in the index. Thus, to compensate for the benchmark's lower exposure to the technology sector, the price-weighted index, tracking 30 large publicly-owned companies, has replaced ExxonMobil – plummeting 8% in the past 10 years – with Salesforce.
- ▼ Lower refining margin in both U.S. and non-U.S. operations has been hurting the company's downstream business. Notably, the segment recorded a loss of \$1.1 billion in 2020 against the year-ago profit of \$2.3 billion, primarily due to lower margins in both U.S. and non-U.S. operations since market demand was weak. Even in the first quarter, the downstream segment recorded a loss of \$390 million due to a decline in refinery throughput. Given the fact that the global economy is still facing lower energy demand due to the coronavirus pandemic, the downstream situation is not expected to improve drastically anytime soon.
- ▼ ExxonMobil has maintained its quarterly dividend at 87 cents per share. Since the coronavirus pandemic has shocked the energy market, many leading energy firms have opted to slash dividends as a measure of preserving cashflows. Hence, the company's decision to maintain dividends is worth appreciating. However, it is expected to be difficult for the energy major to sustain a high payout rate since the company's overall business is severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Importantly, if the impact on demand stays longer than expected, it can introduce a risk factor as far as its dividend payments are concerned.
- ▼ Owing to ExxonMobil's huge counter-cyclical capital spending program, which has been deteriorating its cash flow generation capabilities, the company may need to compromise balance sheet strength in the medium term. Once its balance sheet strength gets compromised, ExxonMobil may be compelled to lower dividend. However, the company is unlikely to take a rash step to lower dividend in the near term since it has a long track record of increasing dividend.

Weakness in the firm's downstream business is a concern.

Last Earnings Report

ExxonMobil Q1 Earnings & Revenues Beat Estimates

ExxonMobil's first-quarter 2021 earnings per share of 65 cents — excluding identified items — beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of 59 cents and year-ago earnings of 53 cents.

Total revenues of \$59,147 million beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$55,156 and also improved from the year-earlier figure of \$56,158 million.

The strong earnings were owing to higher chemical margins and improved realized commodity prices.

Quarter Ending 03/2021

Report Date	Apr 30, 2021
Sales Surprise	7.24%
EPS Surprise	10.17%
Quarterly EPS	0.65
Annual EPS (TTM)	-0.20

Operational Performance

Upstream

The segment reported quarterly earnings of \$2.6 billion, up from profits of \$536 million in a year ago comparable quarter. This upside was driven by higher commodity prices.

Operations in the United States recorded a profit of \$363 million against a loss of \$704 million in the March quarter of 2020. Moreover, the company reported profits of \$2.2 billion from non-U.S. operations, which improved from profits of \$1.2 billion in the year-ago quarter.

Production: Total production averaged 3.787 million barrels of oil-equivalent per day (MMBoe/d), lower than 4.046 MMBoe/d a year ago, reflecting the impact of winter storm.

Liquid production decreased to 2.258 million barrels per day (MMBbls/d) from 2.480 MMBbls/d in the prior-year quarter. The underperformance was owing to lower production in the United States and Asia. Moreover, natural gas production was 9.173 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d), down from 9.396 Bcf/d a year ago due to lower output from the United States.

Price Realization: In the United States, the company recorded crude price realization of \$56.20 per barrel, higher than the year-ago quarter's \$42.82. The same metric for non-U.S. operations rose to \$53.41 per barrel from the year-ago figure of \$41.96. Moreover, natural gas prices in the United States were recorded at \$3.36 per thousand cubic feet (Kcf), higher than the year-ago quarter's \$1.69. Also, in the non-U.S. section, the metric improved to \$6.13 per Kcf from \$5.60 in first-quarter 2020.

Downstream

The segment recorded a loss of \$390 million, narrower than the loss of \$611 million a year ago, thanks to improved industry fuel margin, partially offset by a decline in refinery throughput.

Notably, ExxonMobil's refinery throughput averaged 3.8 MMBbls/d, lower than the year-earlier level of 4.1 MMBbls/d.

Chemical

This unit recorded \$1.4-billion profit, skyrocketing from earnings of \$144 million in the year-ago quarter on significantly higher margins from U.S. and non-U.S. operations.

Financials

During the quarter under review, ExxonMobil generated cash flow of \$7.6 billion from operations and asset divestments. The company's capital and exploration spending declined 56.1% year over year to \$3.1 billion.

At the end of first-quarter 2021, total cash and cash equivalents were \$3.5 billion and debt amounted to \$63.3 billion.

Guidance

The energy giant reaffirmed its expectations for 2021 capital spending at \$16 billion to \$19 billion.

Recent News

ExxonMobil Finds More Oil in Stabroek, Offshore Guyana – Jun 09, 2021

ExxonMobil announced another significant discovery at Longtail-3 well, offshore Guyana. In the first quarter of this year, the company added two drillships in offshore Guyana looking for hydrocarbons, taking the total to six at present.

The Longtail-3 well is located in the famous Stabroek Block, where it has made numerous world-class oil discoveries so far. The new finding adds on to the previous estimate of gross recoverable resource of 9 billion barrels of oil equivalent. ExxonMobil discovered 230 feet of net oil pay at Longtail-3, which comprises high quality hydrocarbon bearing reservoirs. Notably, the well was drilled by Stena DrillMAX at 1860 meters of water depth and located almost 2 miles south from the Longtail-1 well. The Longtail-1, having 78 meters of high quality of oil bearing sandstone reservoir, was drilled in 2018.

The Stena DrillMAX drillship is expected to move on to Whiptail-1 well next. Another drillship, Noble Sam Croft is currently working on Liza Phase 2. The company also confirmed Mako-2 evaluation well's reservoir quality, which might allow the company to add a fifth floating production storage and offloading (FPSO) facility to the Liza Complex field development. However, the Koebi-1 exploration well of Stabroek block encountered hydrocarbons but not in commercial volumes.

ExxonMobil, with a 45% interest, is the operator of the Stabroek Block that covers 6.6 million acres. Partner Hess Corporation owns a 30% interest in the block. The remaining 25% stake is held by a wholly-owned subsidiary of CNOOC Limited.

Notably, ExxonMobil recently resumed drilling the Jabillo-1 well, in the Canje Block offshore Guyana using Stena Carron, a sixth-generation harsh environment drillship. This year, the company intends to drill three wells in the Canje Block, wherein it plans to replicate the success from the Stabroek Block. ExxonMobil is the operator of the block with a 35% stake. It has TotalEnergies SE, JHI, and Mid-Atlantic Oil & Gas as partners, having 35%, 17.5% and 12.5% interests, respectively.

Valuation

ExxonMobil shares are up 52% in the year-to-date period and 35.7% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Oil-Energy sector are up 28.4% and 27.2% in the year-to-date period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and sector are up 26.6% and 38.2%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 13.1% in the year-to-date period and 42.7% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 1.09X forward 12-month sales, which compares to 0.71X for the Zacks sub-industry, 0.89X for the Zacks sector, and 4.70X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 1.68X and as low as 0.61X, with a 5-year median of 1.13X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$66.00 price target reflects 1.15X F12M sales.

The table below shows summary valuation data for XOM.

Valuation Multiples - XOM					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/S F12M	Current	1.09	0.71	0.89	4.7
	5-Year High	1.68	0.87	1.46	4.74
	5-Year Low	0.61	0.44	0.6	3.21
	5-Year Median	1.13	0.74	0.94	3.72
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	7.9	5.14	5.79	17.32
	5-Year High	14.06	9.87	10.56	17.74
	5-Year Low	4.6	2.84	3.1	9.63
	5-Year Median	9.13	5.41	5.77	13.46
P/B TTM	Current	1.62	1.08	1.33	7.02
	5-Year High	2.23	1.48	1.57	7.03
	5-Year Low	0.67	0.51	0.54	3.84
	5-Year Median	1.67	1.21	1.33	5.02

As of 06/09/2021

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 38% (96 out of 251)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
BP p.l.c. (BP)	Neutral	3
Chevron Corporation (CVX)	Neutral	3
Eni SpA (E)	Neutral	3
Ecopetrol S.A. (EC)	Neutral	3
Marathon Petroleum Corporation (MPC)	Neutral	3
Phillips 66 (PSX)	Neutral	4
Royal Dutch Shell PLC (RDS.A)	Neutral	3
TOTAL SE (TOT)	Neutral	3

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Oil And Gas - Integrated - International				Industry Peers		
	XOM	X Industry	S&P 500	BP	CVX	RDS.A
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	3	3
VGM Score	A	-	-	A	B	A
Market Cap	265.23 B	23.82 B	30.22 B	93.59 B	207.81 B	155.45 B
# of Analysts	8	2	12	6	8	4
Dividend Yield	5.55%	1.55%	1.29%	4.49%	4.97%	3.49%
Value Score	B	-	-	A	C	A
Cash/Price	0.01	0.22	0.06	0.37	0.03	0.23
EV/EBITDA	16.78	6.41	17.40	-17.39	18.92	6.99
PEG F1	2.68	0.69	2.13	0.58	3.90	2.33
P/B	1.62	1.03	4.17	1.03	1.56	0.93
P/CF	5.94	5.70	17.80	10.14	10.52	2.71
P/E F1	16.90	9.35	21.56	11.28	19.52	9.30
P/S TTM	1.44	0.92	3.51	0.58	2.18	0.86
Earnings Yield	5.95%	10.66%	4.55%	8.84%	5.12%	10.75%
Debt/Equity	0.28	0.47	0.66	0.67	0.31	0.53
Cash Flow (\$/share)	10.55	4.13	6.83	2.72	10.25	14.68
Growth Score	A	-	-	A	C	A
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	-26.48%	0.99%	9.44%	52.68%	42.54%	0.98%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	1,229.15%	251.11%	21.30%	244.67%	2,860.00%	245.16%
Current Cash Flow Growth	55.92%	-24.55%	0.98%	-66.87%	-53.44%	26.85%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	5.45%	-3.86%	7.28%	-15.30%	-5.67%	8.91%
Current Ratio	0.80	1.29	1.39	1.29	1.11	1.30
Debt/Capital	21.57%	33.23%	41.53%	40.22%	23.40%	34.47%
Net Margin	-10.35%	-7.03%	11.95%	-7.03%	-8.15%	-8.82%
Return on Equity	-0.48%	3.18%	16.36%	-4.52%	-0.82%	3.23%
Sales/Assets	0.53	0.41	0.51	0.60	0.41	0.48
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	33.73%	33.03%	9.37%	8.64%	43.53%	69.19%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	A	A	B
Daily Price Change	0.84%	0.00%	-0.44%	-0.50%	-0.87%	0.20%
1-Week Price Change	5.28%	4.69%	0.58%	4.61%	4.49%	3.99%
4-Week Price Change	4.35%	4.69%	2.80%	5.35%	0.38%	0.56%
12-Week Price Change	5.52%	5.38%	7.24%	4.23%	-0.23%	-7.87%
52-Week Price Change	23.69%	16.12%	36.87%	4.59%	10.45%	9.85%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	22,503,524	310,589	1,770,532	13,314,530	9,218,072	4,816,091
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	2.94%	0.00%	0.00%	0.41%	2.20%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	3.18%	1.31%	0.03%	1.31%	1.40%	2.03%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	34.52%	22.51%	3.39%	25.57%	13.73%	19.64%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	3.77%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.59%	3.13%

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	B
Growth Score	A
Momentum Score	A
VGM Score	A

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

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

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

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Periods:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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