



[^0]The Home Depot reported fiscal firstquarter (ended May 4th) results that fell short of forecasts, but management's outlook reassured Wall Street. While we expected lingering inclement weather to create a slow start to the spring selling season, the impact was more severe than we had anticipated. Indeed, sales and adjusted earnings were slightly below our calls, but rose 3\% and 16\% year over year, respectively, while comparablestore sales climbed 2.6\%.
Our near-term expectations have not changed much, despite the fiscal firstquarter miss. Weather sapped roughly 100 basis points from April-period comps, and sales in regions where the weather was not an issue were quite strong. Too, potential sales that were lost last quarter will likely be recouped in the July interim. May comps are tough, but management described sales trends that month as "robust". Additionally, sales to professional customers have remained strong, big-ticket transactions continue to grow, and core products have seen steady demand (weakness in the April term was largely due to seasonal and outdoor prod-
ing, heating, and electrical; paint \& furniture; seasonal and specialty items; hardware \& tools. Has about 365,000 employees. Off. \& dir. own less than $1.0 \%$ of common; Capital World Investors, 10.3\% (4/14 Proxy). Chairman \& CEO: Frank Blake. Inc.: DE. Address: 2455 Paces Ferry Road N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30339. Telephone: 770-433-8211. Internet: www.homedepot.com.
ucts). Finally, online sales, which were up $40 \%$ in the fiscal first quarter, and the company's investments in interconnected retail (online, in store, and mobile) should continue to gain steam, as well.
Housing suffered some reversals in late 2013 and early 2014. A harsh winter, rising mortgage rates, and falling affordability levels weighed on the sector. A sharp rebound in April was followed by a backtrack in May when housing starts and building permits fell month to month. We are not overly concerned, however, given the aggregate levels of both starts and permits. Also, inventories are up (the lack of available housing stock has been a core problem), mortgage rates have trended lower, home prices have climbed, and the broader economy has been picking up at an irregular speed.
All told, we shaved a nickel from our 2014 earnings call to account for the April-period miss, but management's outlook was virtually unchanged. We still like HD for conservative investors, as risk-adjusted total return potential appears favorable at the recent quotation. Matthew E. Spencer, CFA June 27, 2014
(A) Fiscal year ends Sunday closest to January 31st of the following year (B) Diluted earnings. Excludes nonrecurring gains/(losses): '07, (\$0.10); '08, (\$0.44); '09,
(\$0.09); '10, (\$0.02); '12, (\$0.10); '14, \$0.04 Totals may not sum due to rounding. Next earnings report due August 19th.
(C) Dividends historically paid in earnings report due August 19th
(C) Dividends historically paid in

Sept., and Dec. ■ Div'd reinvest. plan avail.
(D) In millions, adjusted for stock splits
(E) Includes intangibles. At 2/2/14: $\$ 1,289$ mill.

Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability
Price Growth Persistence
Earnings Predictability
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[^0]:    BUSINESS: The Home Depot, Inc. operates a chain of 2,263 retail
    building supply/home improvement "warehouse" stores across the U.S. and in Canada and Mexico (as of $5 / 4 / 14$ ). Acquired Hughes Supply in 1/06. Average store size: $104,000 \mathrm{sq}$. ft. indoor plus $24,000 \mathrm{sq}$. ft. garden center. Items stocked: about 35,000 . Product lines include building materials, lumber, floor/wall coverings; plumb

