

chain, operating 3,522 supercenters (includes grocery departments), 415 discount stores, 660 Sam's Clubs, and 735 Neighborhood Markets in the U.S., plus 6,363 foreign stores, many in Latin America, with the rest in Asia, Canada, and the U.K. as of 1/31/17. Total store space: 1.164 billion square feet. Retail space is largely

ter. Groceries accounted for 56% of U.S. sales; sales per square foot in 2016: about \$420. Has 2,300,000 employees. Off./dir. own 51.6% of shares (4/17 proxy). Chairman: Gregory B. Penner. CEO and Pres.: Doug McMillon. Inc.: DE. Addr.: 702 S.W. 8th St., Bentonville, AR 72716. Tel.: 479-273-4000. Internet: www.walmart.com.

ANNUAL RATES Past Est'd '14-'16 Past to '20-'22 10 Yrs. of change (per sh) 5 Yrs. Sales "Cash Flow" 7.5% 7.5% 5.0% 4.0% 5.0% 6.5% 5.5% 8.0% 4.0% Earnings Dividends 3.0% 9.5% 6.0% Book Value 5.0%

60239

38487

64619

**Current Assets** 

Accts Payable Debt Due

Current Liab.

Other

1941

56763

42839

6028 23944

72811

57689

41433

3920 21575

66928

Fiscal Year	QUARTERLY SALES (\$ mill.) A				Full Fiscal
Begins	Apr.30	Jul.31	Oct.31	Jan.31	Year
2014	114960	120125	119001	131565	485651
2015	114826	120229	117408	129667	482130
2016	115904	120854	118179	130936	485873
2017	117542	123355	120900	133203	495000
2018	120625	125250	123700	136425	506000
Fiscal	EARNINGS PER SHARE A B Figure 1				
Year Begins	Apr.30	Jul.31	Oct.31	Jan.31	Fiscal Year
2014	1.10	1.21	1.15	1.61	5.07
2015	1.03	1.08	1.03	1.43	4.57
2016	.98	1.07	.98	1.30	4.32
2017	1.00	1.08	.97	1.30	4.35
2018	1.05	1.15	1.10	1.35	4.65
Cal-	QUARTERLY DIVIDENDS PAID = C Full				
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2013	.47	.47	.47	.47	1.88
2014	.48	.48	.48	.48	1.92
2015	.49	.49	.49	.49	1.96
2016	.50	.50	.50	.50	2.00
2017	.51	.51	.51		

Wal-Mart's stock is doing well. The share price advanced around 9% after the company gave an upbeat outlook for next year and provided encouraging details on its growth initiatives at the annual investor meeting. Prior 2017 earnings guidance of \$4.30-\$4.40 was reiterated, and WMT released 2018 revenue and earnings growth guidance of 3% and 5%, respectively. Same-store sales ought to remain positive, and the U.S. e-commerce platform is expected to increase sales by 40%. A new \$20 billion share repurchase program that's scheduled to be completed in two years was also well received. We would have preferred it if even more capital was going back into the business, though.

Omni-channel initiatives abound. Wal-Mart's pace of innovation is making rivals' efforts look pedestrian. The company continues to test and roll out cutting-edge ways to streamline the online and in-store shopping experiences, as well as cater to shoppers' evolving preferences. The newest initiative is Mobile Express Returns, which uses the Walmart app to make returning products more seamless. Wal-Mart also struck a deal with Google to allow

shoppers to order goods via the tech giant's voice-activated smart speaker, Google Home. Too, Wal-Mart was an early mover on the buy online, pickup in-store trend and plans to expand the service to 1,000 more locations in 2018, roughly doubling the current footprint. A new option for longer delivery times in exchange for discounts is also promising. As good as the e-commerce business has been, it is still operating at a loss. We expect this to narrow in 2018 as higher volumes leverage fixed costs, and fees third-parties pay to list goods on Walmart.com expand.

Wal-Mart's investment strategy ap**pears sound.** The company plans to open just 25 U.S. stores in 2018. Capital expenditures will instead be focused on opening 255 locations in attractive existing international markets, e-commerce, supply chain initiatives, and upgrading IT infrastructure. Wal-Mart will continue to "invest in price" and pressure vendor partners to keep merchandise costs low.

Although untimely, the shares offer solid long-term price appreciation potential on a risk-adjusted basis. Kevin Downing October 27, 2017

(A) Fiscal year ends Jan. 31st of following calendar year. Sales exclude rentals from licensed depts. (B) Based on diluted shares. May not sum due to rounding. Excls. n/r

(losses)/gains: '01, (\$0.01); '05, \$0.03; '08, Mar., May, Aug., and Dec.■ Dividend reinvest-(\$0.07); '09, \$0.04; '10, \$0.40; '11, \$0.03; '13, ment plan available. (\$0.23); '15 (\$0.08). Next earnings report due (**D**) In millions. mid-Nov. (C) Divds. historically paid in early

Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability A++ 95 Price Growth Persistence 20 **Earnings Predictability** 95

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