

erating 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 1/31/18. Total store space: 1.164 billion square feet. Retail space is largely owned, and

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 (4/18 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 '15-'17 Past 10 Yrs. to '21-'23 of change (per sh) 5 Yrs. Sales "Cash Flow" 6.5% 6.0% 4.0% 2.0% 4.5% 6.0% Earnings Dividends Book Value -0.5% 7.0% 4.0% 7.0% 7.5% 3.5% 4 5%

1941

57689

41433

21575

66928

3920

59664

46092

78521

Current Assets

Accts Payable Debt Due

Current Liab.

Other

3543

66370

43128

2228 26327

71683

Fiscal Year	QUARTERLY SALES (\$ mill.) A				Full Fiscal
Begins	Apr.30	Jul.31	Oct.31	Jan.31	Year
2015	114826	120229	117408	129667	482130
2016	115904	120854	118179	130936	485873
2017	117542	123355	123179	136267	500343
2018	122700	128028	125200	139572	515500
2019	125900	131850	129400	148300	535450
Fiscal	EARNINGS PER SHARE A B				_Full
Year Begins	Apr.30	Jul.31	Oct.31	Jan.31	Fiscal Year
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	1.00	1.33	4.42
2018	1.14	1.29	1.02	1.35	4.80
2019	1.18	1.30	1.02	1.40	4.90
Cal-	QUARTERLY DIVIDENDS PAID = C				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
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	.51	2.04
2018	.52	.52	.52		

Walmart continues to perform at a high level. For the July quarter, earnings per share advanced more than 19% on a year over year basis. The top line rose 3.6% in constant-currency terms, but the gross margin still dipped 34 basis points, owing to price investment, higher oil prices lifting transportation costs, and an unfavorable product mix toward less profitable e-commerce merchandise. Walmart U.S. delivered the best quarterly samestore sales results in over a decade. That metric rose 4.5% excluding fuel, with traffic and ticket growth contributing around same amount. The growth rate benefited from a favorable economic environment and relatively warm weather. Notably, management reported that the average Walmart customer feels better about the current health of the economy, their employment opportunities, and their personal finances.

The omnichannel business continues to thrive. The 40% rise in e-commerce receipts in the fiscal second quarter was much improved from the 23% rate achieved in the April period, and contributed 100 basis points to the domestic

same-store sales advance. Meanwhile, the company continues to build out infrastructure of automated pickup towers for general merchandise. This feature should be present in 700 locations by the end of this year. Too, it now has 1,800 locations with grocery pickup, and ought to be able to deliver groceries to 40% of the U.S. population by yearend.

Guidance was cut. The company lowered expectations at the recent investment community meeting. The primary reason was costs associated with integrating Indian ecommerce platform Flipkart, which WMT purchased last year for \$16 billion. It now expects to bring in between \$4.65 and \$4.80 per share which is lower than the prior range of \$4.90-\$5.05.

These shares are neutrally ranked. In-

itiatives to improve the shopping experience appear to be paying off. Too, strong underlying demand and a cutting-edge omnichannel strategy should ensure mo-mentum continues. Still, recent price appreciation will probably make these highquality shares less attractive to value-oriented investors.

Kevin Downing

October 26, 2018

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

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

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