Zacks Small-Cap Research

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CTS Corporation (CTS-NYSE)

CTS: Third quarter operating income above expectations due to improved gross margins and tight cost control. Results obscured by $16.9 million of non-recurring charges.

Current Recommendation	**Buy**
Prior Recommendation	Hold
Date of Last Change	08/24/2009
Current Price (10/26/2015)	$20.16
Target Price	**$25.00**

OUTLOOK

After a successful restructuring CTS Corp. is consolidating its operations, which is improving gross margins, and is poised to resume growth. Recent orders are growing rapidly. It is finding new opportunities for its sensor portfolio, piezo ceramic technologies and ClearPlex technology for electronic filtering while it refreshes older product lines and expands offerings, all of which should drive growth in 2016 and beyond. Long term, by 2017, 2014 automotive design wins are expected to kick in to accelerate growth from current levels. We have increased our price target to $25 a share.

SUMMARY DATA

52-Week High	**$20.16**
52-Week Low	**$15.47**
One-Year Return (%)	**21.7**
Beta	**1.3**
Average Daily Volume (sh)	**84,238**
Shares Outstanding (mil)	**32.7**
Market Capitalization ($mil)	**$667**
Short Interest Ratio (days)	**6.8**
Institutional Ownership (%)	**87.5**
Insider Ownership (%)	**2**
Annual Cash Dividend	**$0.16**
Dividend Yield (%)	**0.8**
5-Yr. Historical Growth Rates	
Sales (%)	**-7.3**
Earnings Per Share (%)	**10.3**
Dividend (%)	**7.1**
P/E using TTM EPS	**20.4**
P/E using 2016 Estimate	**18.1**
P/E using 2017 Estimate	**16.0**
P/S using N4Q sales	**1.7**

Risk Level	**Low**
Type of Stock	**Small-Blend**
Industry	**Elec-Misc Comp**

ZACKS ESTIMATES

Revenue
(in millions of $)

	Q1 (Mar)	Q2 (Jun)	Q3 (Sep)	Q4 (Dec)	Year (Dec)
2013	**98.1 A**	**105.4 A**	**103.6 A**	**102.4 A**	**409.5 A**
2014	**100.7 A**	**103.0 A**	**100.0 A**	**100.4 A**	**404.0 A**
2015	**98.3 A**	**100.1 A**	**90.6 A**	**97.0 E**	**386.0 E**
2016	**101.0 E**	**105.0 E**	**100.0 E**	**103.0 E**	**409.0 E**

Earnings per Share
(Fully Diluted Adjusted EPS before non-recurring items)

	Q1 (Mar)	Q2 (Jun)	Q3 (Sep)	Q4 (Dec)	Year (Dec)
2013	**$0.11A**	**$0.22A**	**$0.18A**	**$0.24A**	**$0.75A**
2014	**$0.19A**	**$0.25A**	**$0.29A**	**$0.24A**	**$0.97A**
2015	**$0.21A**	**$0.30A**	**$0.24A**	**$0.26E**	**$1.00E**
2016	**$0.28E**	**$0.30E**	**$0.27E**	**$0.27E**	**$1.11E**

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RECENT EVENTS

As expected the third quarter was impacted by currency fluctuations, with a weak Euro reducing revenue by $1.7 million. There will also be a negative impact in the fourth quarter.

Weak sales to the auto industry and an inventory adjustment by hard drive manufacturers also had a negative effect so revenue was below our estimate. Despite these problems operating income before other charges was ahead of expectations at $13.3 million versus our estimate of $12.5 million. After adjustments for all non-reoccurring charges net EPS was $0.23 just a penny short of our estimate.

Gross margins improved on a sequential basis, helped by manufacturing operations but no sales in countries with weak currencies. The charges for closing the Canadian facilities include severance pay. These charges should decline in the 4Q15.

Sales to the automobile sector declined partly because some products are being phased out whilst their newer products are replacing them plus the seasonality of the auto industry. These newer products are, usually, more profitable than the older ones they replace. Although the auto industry in the USA has shown above average growth over the last few years, demand in Europe has been soft. Hopefully this will change for the better in 2016 and 2017.

In the HDD business there has been a small inventory adjustment at the customer level. The good news here is that CTS is launching new products which should have a positive impact in 2016.

A $14.5 million charge was taken in the third quarter for remediation of facilities operated by CTS over 10 years ago. Remediation work is expected to start next year. It is difficult to estimate the total cost but CTS has discussed all of the requirements with the EPA and it thinks the charge is sufficient to cover all expenses.

Management expects a sequential increase in revenue in the fourth quarter, followed by single digit growth in 2016 with an increasing growth rate in 2017. Although potential acquisition candidates do exist the prices are high at this point in time. We have not included any acquisitions in our current estimates.

Orders in the 3Q15 were $95 million, $71 million in the auto sector and $24 million in the other businesses. Cash on the balance sheet increased slightly from the 2Q15, to $150.8 million and the stock buy-back continued ($4.3 million in 3Q15).

Second quarter results.

Second quarter revenue exceeded corporate guidance and our estimates. This was an impressive performance, especially since currency fluctuations reduced revenue by $2.1 million. Second quarter orders increased by 90% Y/Y, from $89 million to $169 million. The orders do include products that will not be shipped this year and late next year.

The Euro continues to be below year ago levels but it seems to have weathered the Grecian turmoil and is trading in a narrow band versus the dollar. The Chinese Yuan is also trading in a fairly narrow band but is still well below its value of a year ago. We would expect some currency valuation impact in 3Q15 since the average currency valuations are still below year ago levels, with a significant decline in the Yuan in early August, 2015.

The unfortunate impact of the strong dollars was a reduction in income from the SE Asian operations, which dropped operating income to below our expectations. Despite this, gross margins increased from 32.8% to 33.4%. There is an offset to the currency impact on revenue in that CTS has operations in countries, like Mexico, where they have no sales. The weak Mexican peso had a positive impact on margins in the second quarter.

The company is amending its tax returns from 2006 to 2013 in which the treatment of foreign taxes will be changed from deductions to credits. This added $16 million to net income. In addition it increased its reserve against certain other foreign taxes which was an increase in taxes of $5 million. The company still expects the tax rate for 2015 and future years to be in the low 30s excluding any extraordinary items

The company reported a one-time charges of $2.1 million for continued restructuring, mainly in moving out of Canada. When adjusting EPS for one-time effects, EPS came in at $0.30 versus an adjusted $0.25 last year, up 18%.

CTS Corporation's cash balance was $147 million and the draw down on the long-term revolving credit facility was $89 million. In the quarter the company bought back 462,000 shares spending $8.5 million.

It is possible however that the company may be able to make an acquisition between now and year-end. It continues to look for opportunities in Europe and to expand its technology portfolio. In piezoelectronics, CTS would like to add the ability to manufacture using tape cast and single crystal that would broaden its product offering to meet different specifications. It is also interested in opportunities in piezoelectric components.

Future Acquisitions Could Add Significantly to Revenues

The company is has $150 million in cash, albeit almost all overseas, and plans to use some of it to acquire companies that can:

- lessen its dependence on the light vehicle automotive market
- improve its manufacturing cost structure
- increase exposure to faster growth markets
- reduce taxes, because anywhere else in the world it could invest, would have a lower tax rate than the US.

If we assume that the company can make accretive acquisitions with its excess cash we estimate that it could use $100 million for acquisitions. Using comps of smaller companies the median value of EV/Revenue is 0.67. At that valuation the company could add about $150 million in revenue without any financial strain. However, in the space CTS is shopping, revenue multiples could be much higher. This has been the main reason the company has yet to buy as it finds prices historically high and believes that the

auto cycle is at a peak, leading to extreme valuation at this point in time. Alternatively, this might make CTS itself a good acquisition target based on its relatively low revenue multiple.

As a comparison, Sensata Technologies acquired Schrader International, the leader in tire sensors, last year for $1 billion. Schrader was expected to generate $550 in revenue in 2014 giving it a valuation of 1.8 times enterprise value to sales. It also bought DeltaTech Controls for $190 million with the expectation of $125 million in revenues or a 1.5 times sales valuation.

INVESTMENT THESIS

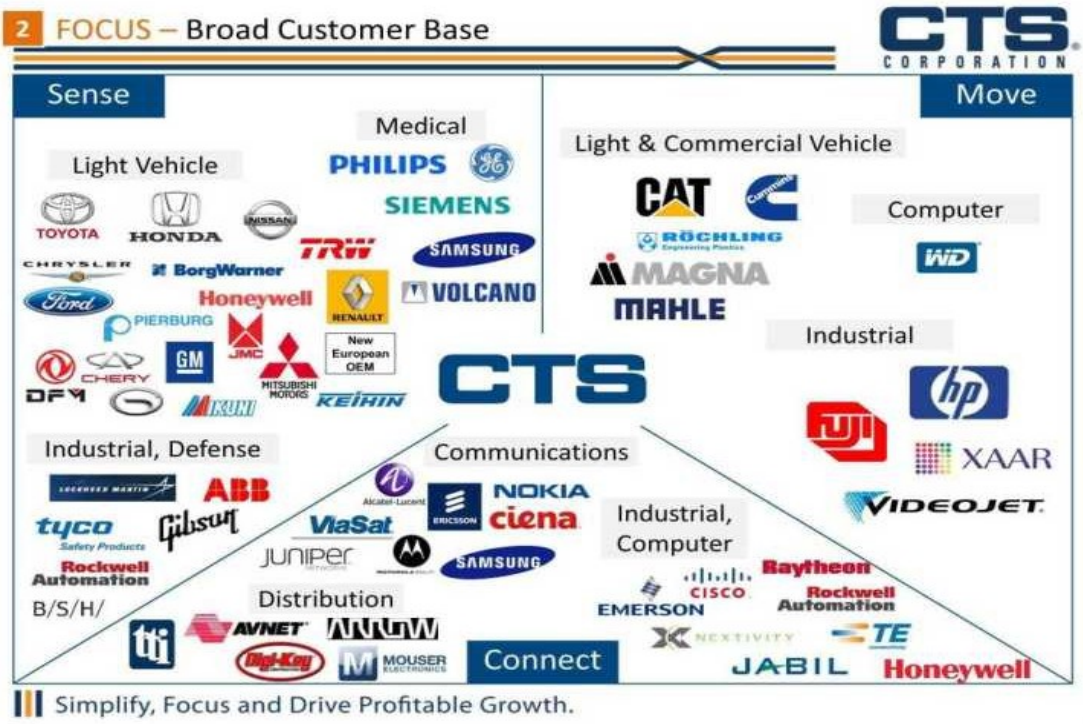
- By reducing its physical locations to 11 (once the Canadian move is complete) lower cost manufacturing facilities, the company is boosting operating margins and has reduced its tax rate.
- The company is now focused on higher margin products and reducing its dependence on the automotive market which could reduce fluctuations in results while increasing its total addressable market.
- With $147 million in cash on the balance sheet (albeit overseas), the company is in an excellent position to pursue growth through acquisition. We believe the company has enough excess cash to buy companies totally upwards of $100 million in incremental revenue.
- New products and the refresh of old products could add to revenues later this year although it could be dampened by currency translation.
- The company has already booked automotive design wins that will develop into meaningful revenues two years out. Based on current design wins, 2017 should show stronger growth.
- Once the US Dollar stabilizes against the Euro and the Yuan the company will exhibit much greater sales and earnings growth.

COMPANY BACKGROUND

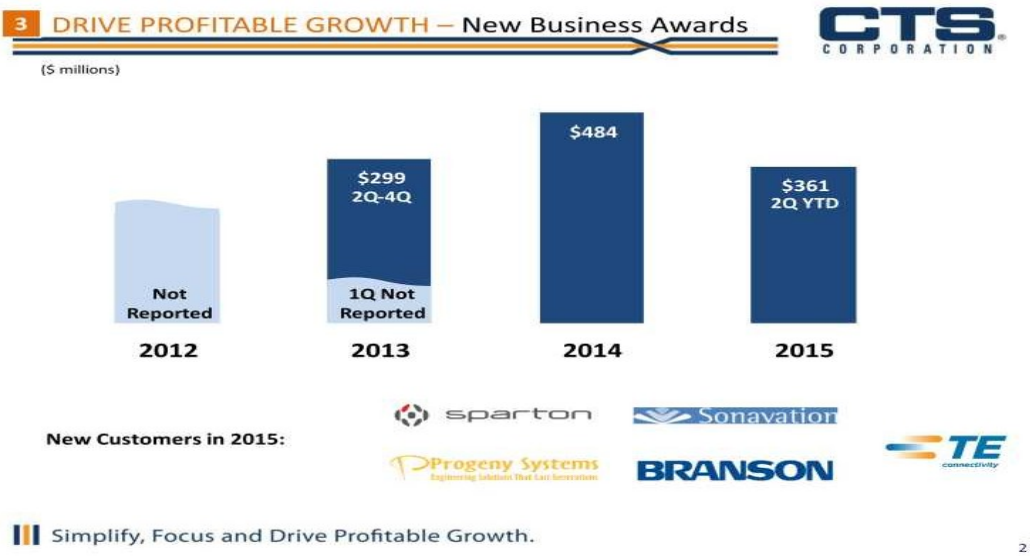
CTS Corporation (CTS) designs, manufactures, assembles, and sells electronic components and sensors worldwide. Over 65% of revenues are sold to the light vehicle automotive market, but the company is working to reduce that percentage. It has found new customers and markets for existing products. It designs and manufactures an extensive line of vehicle sensors and actuators used in powertrain, safety, fuel and emissions control systems; ceramic and crystal-based engineered electronic components used primarily in wireless communications infrastructure equipment, and piezoelectric materials, heat management and resistive-based components used in medical, defense and aerospace, computer, consumer and industrial equipment applications. On October 3, 2013, its Electronics Manufacturing Solutions (EMS) business was sold for $75 million in cash. The company used the cash generated from the sale to pay down debt and as a war chest for potential acquisitions.

CTS Corp.	2012	2013	2014
Fiscal Year Dec. 31.			
Automotive	$179.66	$270.27	$270.70
% change			
Communications	$30.45	$24.57	$16.16
Computer	$18.27	$24.57	$24.24
Medical	$9.14	$8.19	$8.08
Industrial	$39.59	$53.24	$56.56
Defense & Aerospace	$15.23	$16.38	$16.16
Other	$12.18	$12.29	$12.12
All revenue	**$304.50**	**$409.50**	**$404.02**
US sales	**$121.80**	**$204.75**	**$242.42**
Non US sales	**$182.70**	**$204.75**	**$161.60**
Non US assets	**$224.48**	**$192.11**	**$228.47**

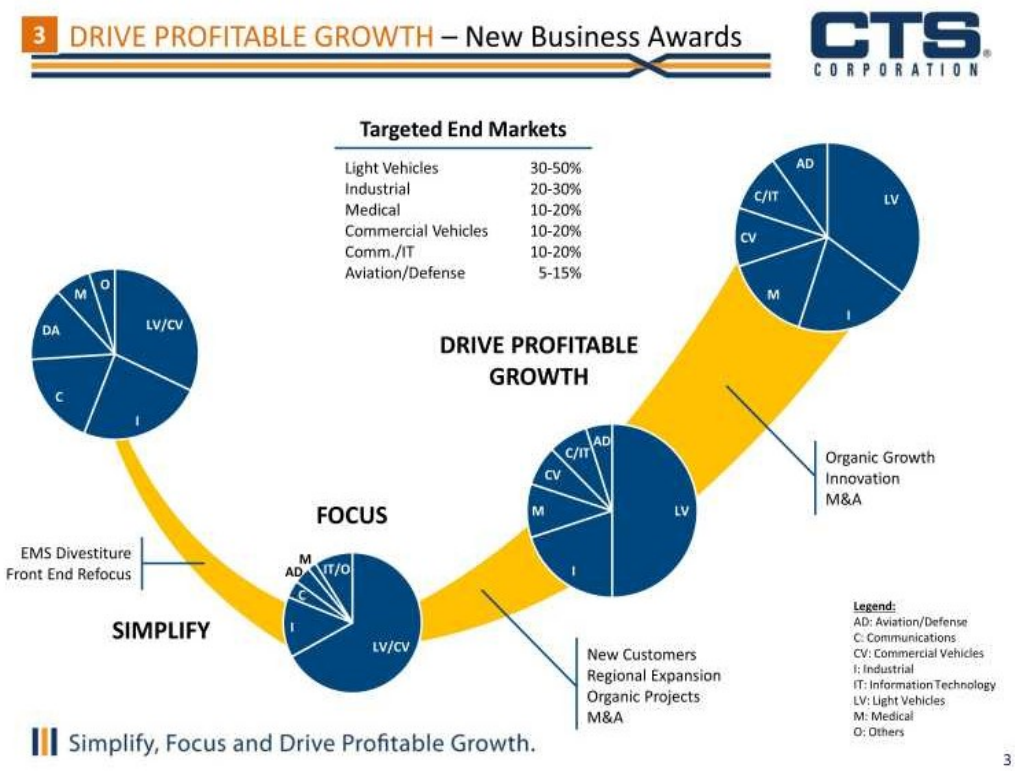
A diverse customer base:



with an accelerating order flow:



Will propel revenue and profits to higher levels.



VALUATION

Compared to other companies in its industry, CTS appears slightly undervalued. However, the increasing order flow and resulting growth in earning does not appear to be reflected in its valuation parameters. The stock is selling at a discount to the median EV/EBITDA for the groups and should be valued closer to the median values.

Sensata Technologies is a specialist in sensors and enjoys a much higher profit margin than the others, as well as a higher growth rate fueled by both internal growth and acquisitions. CTS's move towards a higher margin higher growth business given its focus in sensors and similar products it may be valued more like Sensata Technologies (ST) .

We have increased our price target to $25 a share.

As supplier to the automobile industry CTS customers may be subject to civil and regulatory law suits. In the case of Toyota CTS Corp. has been indemnified by Toyota against any claims. We do not think that this lawsuit should have any impact on the price of the company's stock.

COMPARISON TABLE	Ticker	Price	Mkt	ROE	P/E	P/E	P/B	P/S	EV/Rev.	EV/EBITDA	PEG	Inst.
(Source: Yahoo Finance)		10/27/15	Cap	(%)	L4Q	N4Q	LQ	L4Q	L4Q	L4Q		Ownership %
			(in million)									
CTS Corp.	**CTS**	**$20.16**	**$667**	**11.04**	**20.4**	**18.3**	**2.18**	**1.71**	**1.56**	**8.07**	**1.36**	**79.0**
Over $1 billion Market Cap.												
BorgWarner Inc.	BWA	$44.61	$10,100	17.41	16.05	12.43	2.74	1.26	1.34	8.02	1.34	93.2
Delphi Automotive plc.	DLPH	$85.03	$24,180	42.00	16.65	13.43	9.76	1.45	1.54	10.06	1.22	96.6
OSI Systems Inc	OSIS	$83.49	$1,650	11.70	26.34	18.76	2.83	1.72	1.68	10.02	1.21	94.5
Methode Electronics Inc.	MEI	$33.05	$1,270	23.49	12.62	12.91	2.71	1.47	1.32	7.63	1.03	88.4
Sensata Tech. Holdings NV	ST	$48.50	$8,250	18.09	36.47	15.02	5.88	2.94	3.80	16.23	1.04	100 plus
Synaptics Inc.	SYNA	$84.35	$3,040	15.12	30.33	10.91	4.31	1.61	1.69	10.86	0.96	100 pus
TE Connectivity Ltd.	TEL	$63.83	$25,680	21.03	12.94	15.76	2.82	1.80	2.03	9.95	1.17	93.6
Mean				19.98	21.48	14.70	4.15	1.75	1.87	10.11	1.17	
Median				17.75	18.55	14.23	2.83	1.66	1.62	9.99	1.19	
Under $1 billion Market Cap												`
Accuride Corp.	ACW	$2.78	$133	2.74	77.22	8.69	2.36	0.18	0.58	5.26	0.42	65.7
AMA Group Ltd	AMA.AX	$1.08	$444	19.55	40.07	21.64	7.46	4.63	4.74	31.53	N/A	N/A
Cooper-Standard Holdings Inc.	CPS	$64.91	$1,120	10.70	17.36	9.52	1.94	0.35	0.54	5.52	N/A	100 plus
LGL Group Inc.	LGL	$3.83	$10	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.73	0.46	0.24	N/A	N/A	7.40
Standard Motor Oroducts Inc.	SMP	$39.43	$8,998	13.99	21.29	14.18	2.33	0.93	0.97	8.32	2.27	82.90
Stoneridge Inc.	SRI	$12.72	$355	N/A	N/A	10.87	3.94	0.53	0.69	9.14	N/M	89.10
Westport Innovations Inc	WPRT	$3.22	$207	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.25	1.61	1.90	2.00	N/A	53.50
Exco Technology Ltd.	XTC.TO	$15.05	$638	18.08	16.52	12.24	2.74	1.33	1.31	8.76	N/A	N/A
Mean				13.01	34.49	12.86	2.84	1.25	1.37	10.08	1.35	
Median				13.99	21.29	11.56	2.35	0.73	0.83	8.32	1.35	
Source: Zacks scr and Yahoo finance												

PROJECTED INCOME STATEMENT

CTS Corp.																		
Consolidated Statements of Operations																		
(Dollars in millions except per share data)																		
Fiscal Year Dec. 31.	2012A	2013A	1Q14	2Q14	3Q14	4Q14	2014A	1Q15	2Q15	3Q15	4Q15	2015	1Q16	2Q16	3Q16	4Q16	2016 Est.	2017 Est.
Net sales	**$304.48**	**$409.46**	**$100.71**	**$102.98**	**$99.96**	**$100.38**	**$404.02**	**$98.31**	**$100.07**	**$90.65**	**$97.00**	**$386.03**	**$101.00**	**$105.00**	**$100.00**	**$103.00**	**$409.00**	**$432.00**
% Change													2.74	4.93	10.32	6.19	5.95	5.62
Cost of Goods Sold	212.97	288.11	70.09	69.16	67.46	67.35	274.06	66.18	66.70	59.20	63.54	255.61	66.66	69.30	65.00	66.95	267.91	282.95
S. G. & A.	63.07	69.99	13.64	15.81	13.90	15.78	59.14	15.71	15.22	12.69	15.04	58.66	15.20	15.60	16.00	16.80	63.60	64.80
R&D	20.92	23.22	5.63	5.33	5.81	5.80	22.56	5.20	5.49	5.69	5.50	21.88	5.50	5.50	5.80	5.80	22.60	22.60
Op Income GAAP	7.52	28.14	11.35	12.68	12.79	11.44	48.26	11.23	12.66	13.06	12.93	49.88	13.64	14.60	13.20	13.45	54.89	61.65
Interest Expenses	2.57	3.26	0.61	0.58	0.57	0.56	2.33	0.59	0.65	0.71	0.70	2.66	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	2.80	2.50
Interest Income	1.72	1.90	0.56	0.69	0.71	0.83	2.79	0.79	0.85	0.71	0.90	3.25	0.90	0.90	0.95	0.95	3.70	4.00
Non Op Income	6.90	(10.46)	(1.77)	(0.41)	0.56	(7.76)	(9.38)	(1.68)	0.12	(3.07)	0.00	(4.64)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other	0.88	1.74	(0.50)	(2.73)	(1.57)	4.81	0.00	(0.74)	(2.12)	(16.91)	0.00	(19.77)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Calc.Pretax	14.44	18.06	9.03	9.64	11.92	8.75	39.35	9.00	10.86	(6.92)	13.13	26.07	13.84	14.80	13.45	13.70	55.79	63.15
Taxes	0.95	16.07	3.95	3.28	3.81	0.00	12.83	2.72	(8.22)	(2.16)	4.33	(3.33)	4.43	4.74	4.30	4.38	17.85	20.21
Tax Rate	6.59	88.95	43.71	34.03	31.93	0.00	32.60	30.18	(75.71)	31.24	33.00	(12.79)	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00
Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pro-forma adj. inc. EIDO	(6.90)	17.43	0.50	2.73	1.57	0.00	4.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net Income	13.49	2.00	5.08	6.36	8.12	8.75	26.52	6.29	19.08	(4.76)	8.80	29.40	9.41	10.06	9.15	9.32	37.94	42.94
Net For Common	20.33	(3.93)	5.08	6.36	7.61	8.75	26.52	7.03	19.08	7.74	8.80	42.64	9.41	10.06	9.15	9.32	37.94	42.94
Shares Used, millions	34.52	33.60	34.28	34.21	34.11	34.11	34.13	33.94	33.94	32.77	34.00	34.00	34.00	34.10	34.10	34.20	34.10	34.00
Earnings Per Share																		
EPS	**$0.59**	**$0.06**	**$0.15**	**$0.19**	**$0.24**	**$0.26**	**$0.78**	**$0.19**	**$0.56**	**($0.15)**	**$0.26**	**$0.86**	**$0.28**	**$0.30**	**$0.27**	**$0.27**	**$1.11**	**$1.26**
Pro Forma EPS	**$0.39**	**$0.75**	**$0.19**	**$0.25**	**$0.29**	**$0.24**	**$0.97**	**$0.21**	**$0.30**	**$0.24**	**$0.26**	**$1.00**	**$0.28**	**$0.30**	**$0.27**	**$0.27**	**$1.11**	**$1.26**
DPS	**$0.14**	**$0.15**					**$0.16**											
Backlog, as of January	**$49.80**	**$55.82**					**$61.78**											
Orders		**$299.00**	**$136.00**	**$89.00**	**$88.00**	**$171.00**	**$484.00**	**$192.00**	**$169.00**	**$95.00**	**125 E**	**$581.00**						
The account presentation have been changed by Zacks scr and may not be the same as presented by the company.																		
EIDO : Extra Items and Discontinued Operations																		

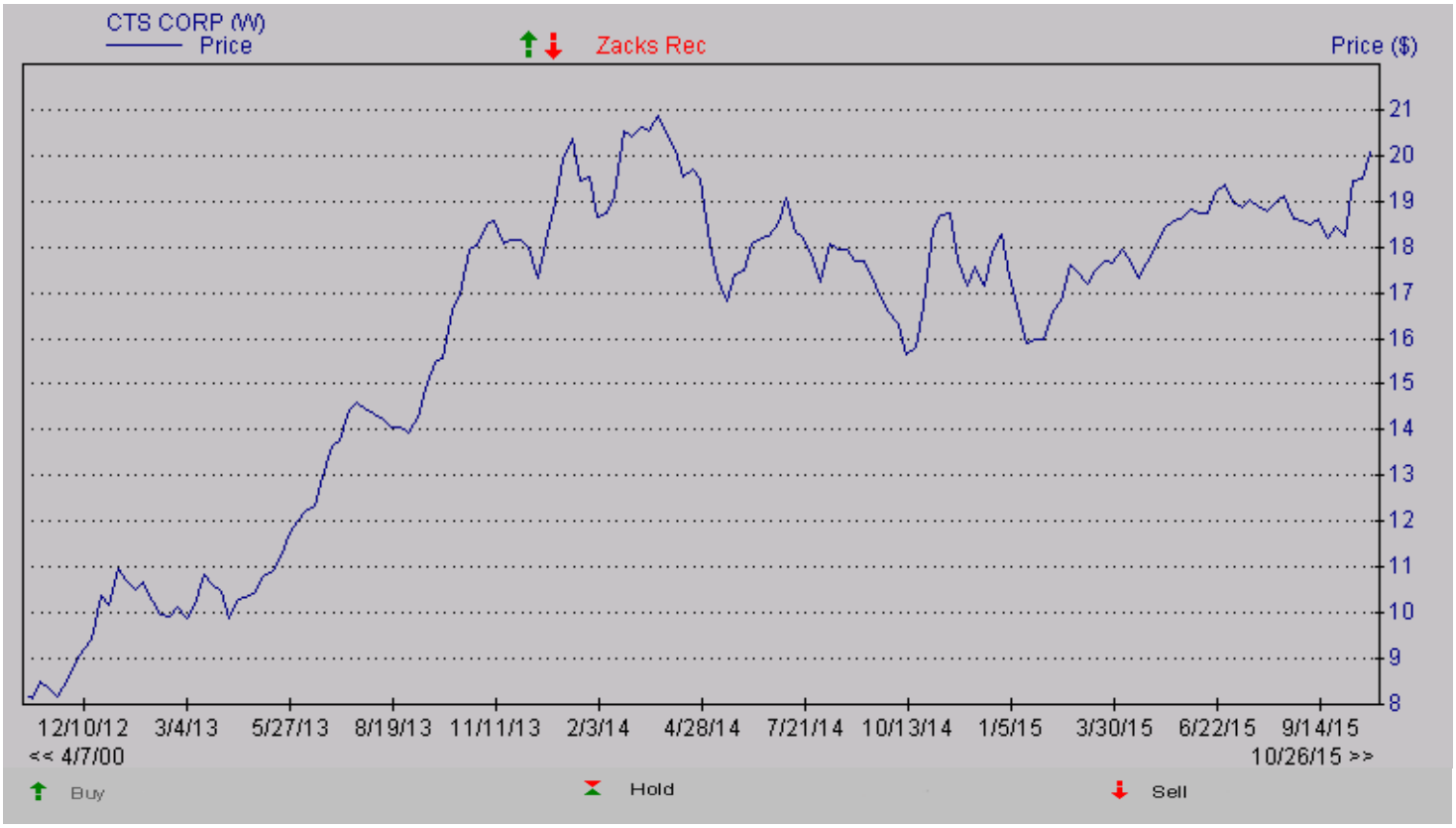
BALANCE SHEET

CTS Corp.						
Consolidated Balance Sheet (in $ millions)						
Fiscal Year Dec. 31.						
	2012A	**2013A**	**2014A**	**1Q15**	**2Q15**	**3Q15**
ASSETS						
Cash & Equiv.	109.57	124.37	134.51	138.33	146.79	150.76
A/R	89.34	62.67	56.89	67.06	63.05	59.21
Inventories	81.75	32.23	27.89	28.58	30.42	26.97
Other	28.63	17.01	21.11	20.74	21.40	20.77
Total current assets	309.30	236.27	240.40	254.71	261.66	257.71
Gross Plant	334.42	74.87	71.41	70.46	70.17	68.93
Acc. Deprn	240.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Investments & Prepaid pensions	0.00	56.40	32.10	34.30	36.56	38.77
Intangibles	83.53	72.83	68.64	67.67	66.68	65.70
Deferred taxes & Other	74.64	39.90	44.37	44.06	54.20	57.63
All Assets	561.19	480.27	456.93	471.20	489.27	488.74
LIABILITIES AND NET WORTH						
Debt Due 1 Yr	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Notes Payable	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
A/P	67.97	47.05	43.34	44.17	45.72	39.48
Taxes/Payroll	16.57	20.82	11.28	9.21	10.36	9.09
Other	30.49	27.25	25.36	29.47	27.40	43.03
Total current liabilities	115.04	95.12	79.98	82.85	83.48	91.60
Conv. Debt	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
L.T.Debt	153.50	75.00	75.00	83.20	88.70	90.50
Other LT	24.89	7.94	3.05	2.96	2.91	2.73
Def. Taxes & ITC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other	0.00	5.48	9.11	9.05	8.65	8.31
All Liabilities	293.43	183.54	167.14	178.06	183.74	193.14
Pref.Stock	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Common Stock	291.51	297.16	299.89	300.71	300.87	300.90
Surplus	40.01	39.63	39.15	39.55	40.24	40.48
Retained Earnings	367.80	359.00	380.15	385.10	402.86	396.80
Other	(120.60)	(81.90)	(104.23)	(104.17)	(101.90)	(101.79)
Treasury Stock	310.96	317.17	325.17	328.06	336.54	340.79
Net Worth	267.76	296.73	289.79	293.13	305.53	295.60
Total liabilities & stockholders' equity	561.19	480.27	456.93	471.20	489.27	488.74
Shares outstanding in millions	33.922	33.601	33.618	33.411	33.08	32.683
Backlog on Jan. 15 of each year.		49.80	55.82	61.78		
Orders for each period				192.00	169.00	95.00

SOURCE & USE OF FUNDS

CTS Corp.					
Condensed Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows					
Fiscal Year Dec. 31.					
	2012A	**2013A**	**2014A**	**9 month 2014**	**9 months 2015**
Cash flow from operations:					
Net (Loss) Income	20.33	(3.93)	26.52	19.56	20.61
Depreciation & amortization	19.62	21.17	16.97	17.02	16.93
Amortization of goodwill					
Stock issued for services					
Stock based compensation	4.10	4.22	2.66	1.84	2.66
Impairment of machinery	2.54	3.77	0.43		
Prepaid pension asset	(7.43)	(5.74)	(8.43)	(6.69)	(6.63)
Other	2.49	18.09	(5.74)	(16.39)	(9.44)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activites	**41.65**	**37.57**	**32.42**	**15.34**	**24.12**
Cash flow from investments:					
Purchase of PP&E	(91.65)	(13.98)	(12.95)	(9.01)	(6.56)
Proceeds from disposal of PP&E	0.50	76.77	4.95	1.85	1.88
Other	17.06				
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	**(74.09)**	**62.79**	**(8.00)**	**(7.16)**	**(4.68)**
Cash flow from financing activities:					
Proceeds from issuance of common stock					
Proceeds (payment) on lines of credit, net	(2.27)	(2.22)	(0.81)	(0.78)	(0.16)
Purchase of treasury stock	(4.76)	(4.87)	(5.37)	3.73	(15.62)
Proceeds fromo debt	5.54	3.79	1,030.20	763.00	958.00
Dividends paid	(4.76)	(4.87)	(5.37)	(4.04)	(3.98)
Payment on debt	(5.46)	(3.87)	(1,030.20)	(757.70)	(943.30)
Other	77.51	(74.52)	(3.45)	(6.61)	1.16
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	**65.60**	**(85.56)**	**(14.29)**	**(1.68)**	**(3.19)**
Increase (decrease) in cash and equivalents	33.16	14.81	10.13	6.51	16.25
Cash & equivalents at beginning of period	76.41	109.57	124.37	124.37	134.51
Cash & equivalents at end of period	109.57	124.37	134.51	130.88	150.76

HISTORICAL ZACKS RECOMMENDATIONS



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