

STRYKER CORP (SYK)

Date: 9/12/2010

Stock Prices

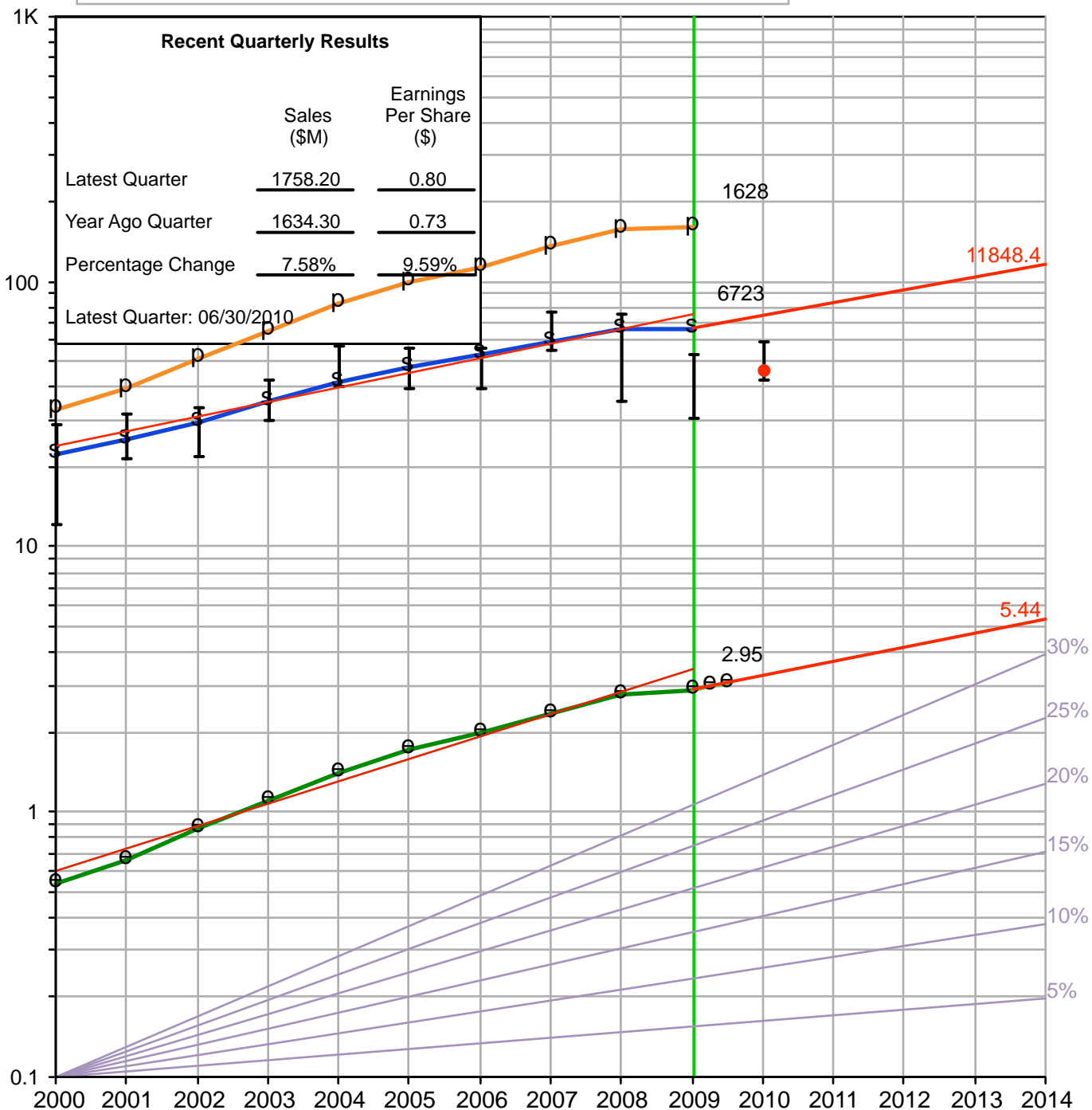
Current Price = \$46.67

52 Week Range = \$42.74 to \$59.72

Exchange: NYSE

Industry:

Share Data	Authorized	Issued	Debt (\$M): 1015.20
Preferred:		0.000	% Total Cap.: 13.08%
Common:	399.200	396.900	
Preferred Stock Dividend:		Dilution: 2.300	



(1) Historical Sales Growth = 13.65%
 (2) Estimated Sales Growth = 12.00%

(3) Historical EPS Growth = 21.54%
 (4) Estimated EPS Growth = 13.0%

ACE 5-year EPS Growth Estimate: 13.0%

2 EVALUATING MANAGEMENT

STRYKER CORP (SYK) - 09/10/2010

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	5 Yr Ave	Trend
% Pretax Profit on Sales (Net Before Tax/Sales)	14.6	15.6	17.4	18.2	19.7	20.9	21.4	23.2	24.0	24.2	22.7	UP
% Earned on Invested Capital (EPS/Book Val)	25.2	24.9	23.3	20.8	20.9	21.8	19.6	18.3	20.7	17.8	19.6	DOWN
% Debt to Equity	102.6	68.1	32.8	0.9	0.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	DOWN

3 PRICE & EARNINGS HISTORY

Current Price: 46.67

52 Week High= 59.72

52 Week Low= 42.74

Year	High Price	Low Price	EPS	PE High	PE Low	Dividend	Payout	High Yield
2005	56.3	39.7	1.75	32.2	22.7	0.110	6.3	0.3
2006	55.9	39.8	2.02	27.7	19.7	0.220	10.9	0.6
2007	76.9	54.9	2.40	32.0	22.9	0.330	13.8	0.6
2008	74.9	35.4	2.83	26.5	12.5	0.400	14.1	1.1
2009	52.7	30.8	2.95	17.9	10.4	0.250	8.5	0.8
TOTAL	316.7	200.6						
AVE	63.3	40.1		27.3	17.6		10.7	
Average Price Earnings Ratio: 22.5					Current Price Earnings Ratio: 15.0			

Current PE Ratio Based on Current EPS [\$3.11]

Projected PE Ratio of [13.3] Based on Projected EPS [\$3.5]

4 EVALUATING BUY, HOLD, & SELL

A. CALCULATED HIGH PRICE - 5 YEARS

Ave High PE 21.0 X Estimated High Earnings/Share 5.44 Projected High Price = \$ 114.2

B. CALCULATED LOW PRICE - 5 YEARS

(a) Avg. Low P/E 17.6 X Estimated Low Earnings/Share 2.95 = \$ 51.92

(b) Avg. Low Price of Last 5 Years = \$40.1 (e) Price Variant = \$37.8

(c) Recent Market Low = \$30.8

(d) Dividend Price Support = \$22.7

Selected Estimated Low Price \$ 37.8

C. BUY/HOLD/SELL ZONES

Selected High of \$114.20 minus Selected Low of \$37.80 = \$76.40 Range. 1/4 of Range = \$19.100

Lower 1/3 = \$37.8 To \$56.90 (Buy)

25%/50%/25% Zoning

Center 1/3 = \$56.90 To \$95.10 (Hold)

Upper 1/3 = \$95.10 To \$114.2 (Sell)

D. UPSIDE RISK ANALYSIS

High Price 114.2 - Current Price 46.67 = **7.6** to 1

Current price of \$46.67 is in the BUY zone

Current Price 46.67 - Low Price 37.8

PEG Ratio = 1.15 Relative Value = 66.7%

Proj PEG = 1.02 Proj Rel Value = 59.0%

5 YIELD ANALYSIS

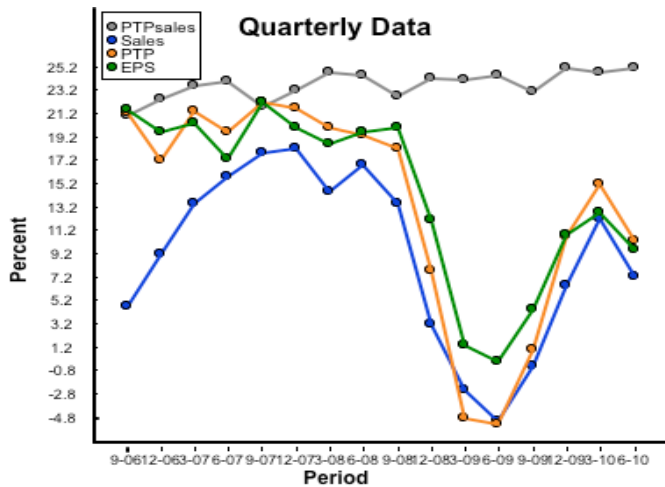
Current Yield = (100 * Current Dividend) ÷ Current Price = 100 * 0.60 / 46.7 = 1.3%

Ave. 5 Yr. Yield = (Ave. EPS(5Yr) * Ave. Payout) ÷ Current Price = (4.26 * 10.7) / 46.7 = 1.0%

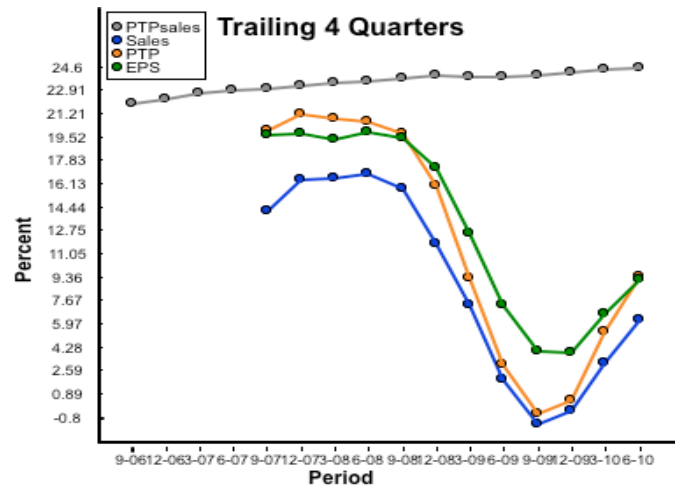
Price Appreciation = ((100 * Projected High Price ÷ Current Price) - 100) ÷ 5 = 28.9 %

Average Total Return = Price Appreciation + Ave. 5 Yr. Yield = 29.9 %

	P.A.R	Tot. Ret.
Average Yield	0.6%	0.5%
Annual Appreciation	<u>17.6%</u>	<u>19.6%</u>
Compounded Annual Return	18.2%	20.1%



Quarterly Performance



Trailing Twelve Months

Quarterly Performance

Period	SALES		PRETAX PROFIT			EARNINGS	
	\$ mil	% Chg	\$ mil	% Sales	% Chg	\$	% Chg
6-10	1758.2	7.6%	442.6	25.2%	10.6%	0.80	9.6%
3-10	1799.1	12.4%	445.8	24.8%	15.4%	0.80	12.7%
12-09	1834.2	6.8%	460.6	25.1%	11.0%	0.82	10.8%
9-09	1653.3	0.0%	381.4	23.1%	1.4%	0.69	4.5%
6-09	1634.3	-4.6%	400.0	24.5%	-4.8%	0.73	0.0%
3-09	1601.3	-2.0%	386.4	24.1%	-4.4%	0.71	1.4%
12-08	1718.2	3.6%	415.0	24.2%	8.1%	0.74	12.1%
9-08	1653.0	13.7%	376.0	22.7%	18.3%	0.66	20.0%
6-08	1712.6	17.0%	420.1	24.5%	19.5%	0.73	19.7%
3-08	1634.4	14.7%	404.0	24.7%	20.1%	0.70	18.6%
12-07	1658.1	18.4%	384.0	23.2%	21.7%	0.66	20.0%
9-07	1453.2	18.0%	317.9	21.9%	22.2%	0.55	22.2%
6-07	1463.7	16.0%	351.6	24.0%	19.7%	0.61	17.3%
3-07	1425.5	13.7%	336.4	23.6%	21.5%	0.59	20.4%
12-06	1400.4	9.5%	315.6	22.5%	17.3%	0.55	19.6%
9-06	1231.1	5.1%	260.2	21.1%	21.4%	0.45	21.6%

Trailing Twelve Months

Period	SALES	PRETAX PROFIT		EPS	PERCENT CHANGE		
	\$ mil	\$ mil	% Sales	\$	Sales	PTP	EPS
6-10	7044.8	1730.4	24.6%	3.11	6.6%	9.7%	9.5%
3-10	6920.9	1687.8	24.4%	3.04	3.5%	5.7%	7.0%
12-09	6723.1	1628.4	24.2%	2.95	0.1%	0.8%	4.2%
9-09	6607.1	1582.8	24.0%	2.87	-0.8%	-0.1%	4.4%
6-09	6606.8	1577.4	23.9%	2.84	2.3%	3.4%	7.6%
3-09	6685.1	1597.5	23.9%	2.84	7.7%	9.6%	12.7%
12-08	6718.2	1615.1	24.0%	2.83	12.0%	16.2%	17.4%
9-08	6658.1	1584.1	23.8%	2.75	15.9%	19.9%	19.6%
6-08	6458.3	1526.0	23.6%	2.64	17.0%	20.7%	20.0%
3-08	6209.4	1457.5	23.5%	2.52	16.7%	20.9%	19.4%
12-07	6000.5	1389.9	23.2%	2.41	16.6%	21.2%	19.9%
9-07	5742.8	1321.5	23.0%	2.30	14.3%	20.1%	19.8%
6-07	5520.7	1263.8	22.9%	2.20			
3-07	5318.8	1206.0	22.7%	2.11			
12-06	5147.2	1146.5	22.3%	2.01			
9-06	5025.3	1100.0	21.9%	1.92			



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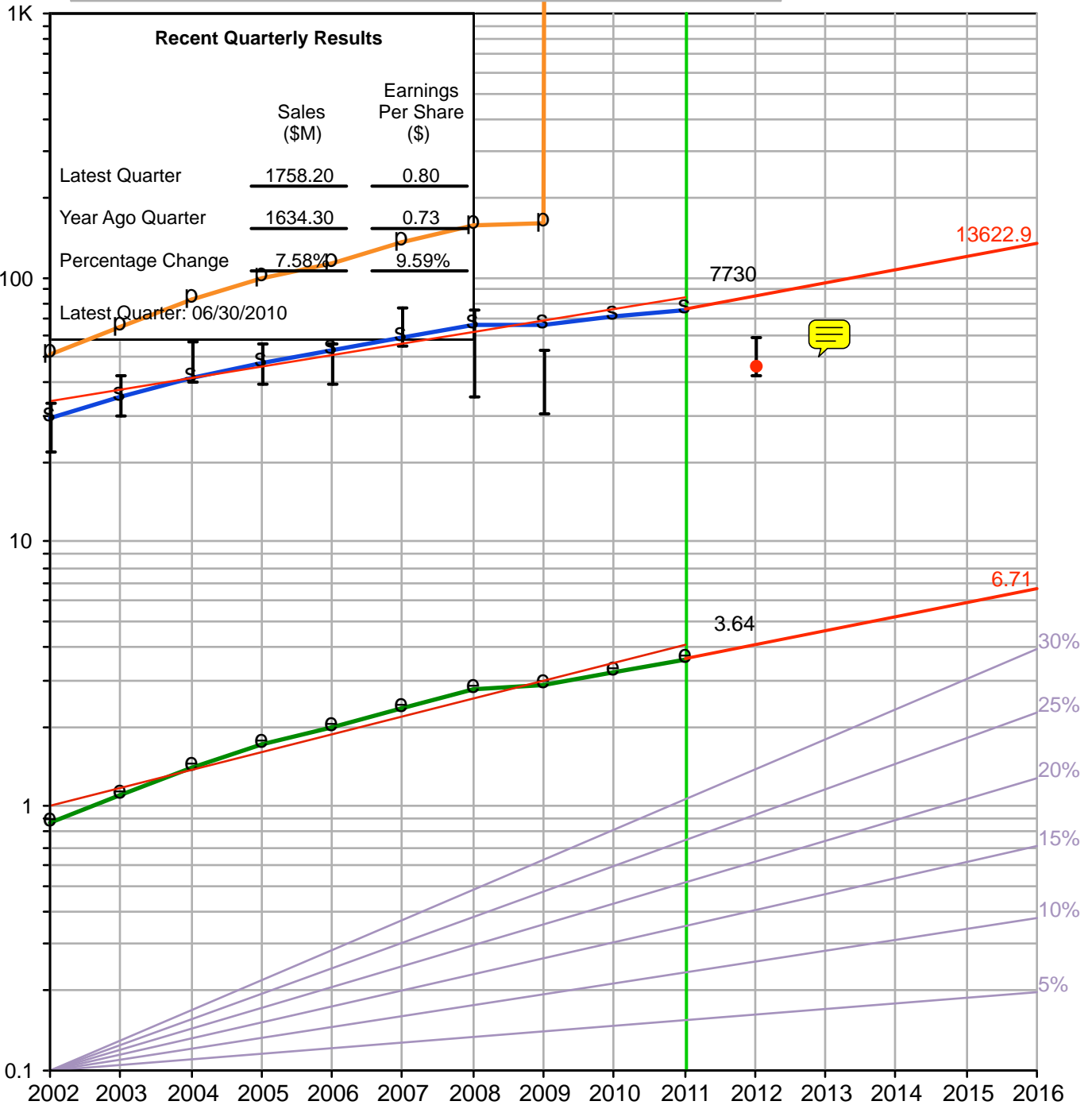
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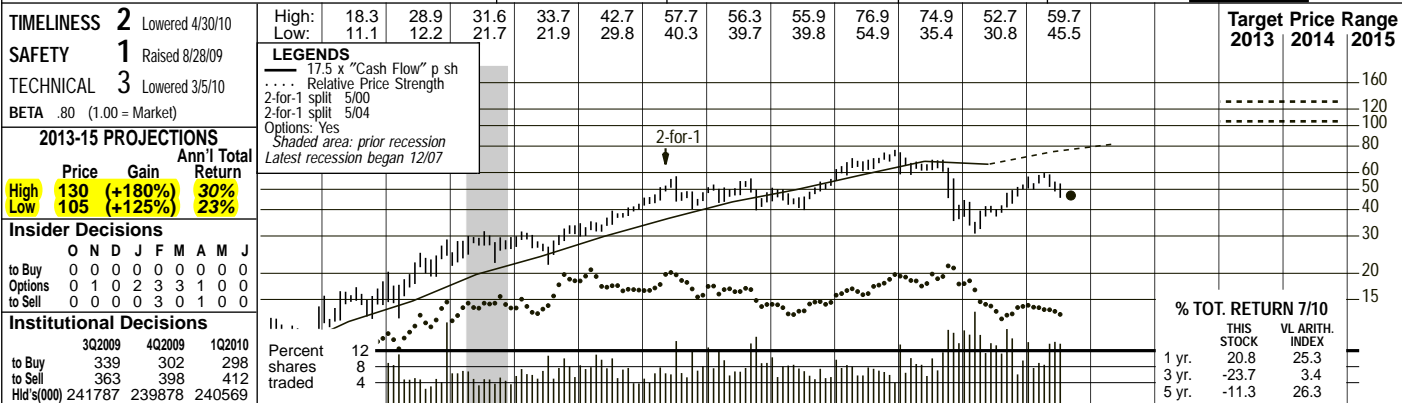
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 (4) Estimated EPS Growth = 13.0%

ACE 5-year EPS Growth Estimate: 13.0%

STRYKER CORP. NYSE-SYK

RECENT PRICE **46.69** P/E RATIO **14.1** (Trailing: 15.9; Median: 30.0) RELATIVE P/E RATIO **0.97** DIV'D YLD **1.3%** VALUE LINE



Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	© VALUE LINE PUB., INC.	13-15
Price	1.76	2.24	2.35	2.55	2.86	5.41	5.84	6.61	7.60	9.08	10.59	12.02	13.25	14.60	16.95	16.90	18.40	19.90	Sales per sh	25.95
Gain	.24	.30	.33	.41	.49	.67	.84	1.13	1.37	1.71	2.08	2.49	2.85	3.33	3.87	3.75	4.30	4.70	"Cash Flow" per sh	6.50
Return	.19	.23	.26	.32	.38	.41	.55	.67	.88	1.12	1.43	1.75	2.02	2.40	2.78	2.77	3.25	3.65	Earnings per sh ^A	5.35
Options	.01	.01	.03	.03	.03	.03	.04	.04	.05	.06	.09	.11	.22	.33	.40	.25	.60	.64	Div'ds Decl'd per sh ^B	.84
to Buy	.08	.09	.07	.09	.13	.20	.21	.41	.35	.47	.67	.53	.46	.39	.33	.40	.40	.40	Cap'l Spending per sh	.40
to Sell	.93	1.17	1.07	1.59	1.69	1.73	2.18	2.68	3.78	5.40	6.84	8.03	10.27	13.09	13.64	16.57	18.75	21.30	Book Value per sh ^C	32.75
Hld's(000)	363	417	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	Common Shs Outst'g ^D	391.00
to Buy	339	302	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	Avg Ann'l P/E Ratio	22.0
to Sell	363	398	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	412	Relative P/E Ratio	1.45
Hld's(000)	241787	239878	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	240569	Avg Ann'l Div'd Yield	.7%

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	© VALUE LINE PUB., INC.	13-15
Total Debt	2289.4	2602.3	3011.6	3625.3	4262.3	4871.5	5405.6	6000.5	6718.2	6723.1	7250	7800	8000.5	8718.2	9300.5	9918.2	10500.5	11118.2	Sales (\$mill)	10150
LT Debt	23.7%	24.7%	24.9%	24.9%	25.6%	26.8%	27.0%	28.2%	28.9%	31.0%	30.5%	31.5%	32.0%	32.8%	33.0%	33.5%	34.0%	34.5%	Operating Margin	33.5%
Leases	109.4	172.0	186.1	229.7	250.9	289.9	331.8	366.6	387.6	385.3	397	405	425	440	455	470	485	495	Depreciation (\$mill)	425
Pension Assets	221.0	271.8	357.1	453.5	586.5	719.1	830.4	1000.7	1147.8	1107.4	1290	1440	1610	1760	1810	1900	1990	2080	Net Profit (\$mill)	2110
Pf'd Stock	34.0%	33.0%	31.8%	30.5%	30.0%	29.4%	28.2%	28.0%	27.4%	31.8%	28.0%	27.4%	27.4%	27.4%	27.4%	27.4%	27.4%	27.4%	Income Tax Rate	28.0%
Common Stock	9.7%	10.4%	11.9%	12.5%	13.8%	14.8%	15.4%	16.7%	17.1%	16.5%	17.8%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	Net Profit Margin	20.8%
MARKET CAP	379.6	459.7	443.8	547.1	1029.1	1621.3	2182.8	3571.9	3517.2	4410.2	6455	7650	8215	9110	9610	10110	10610	11110	Working Cap'l (\$mill)	12915
CURRENT POSITION	876.5	720.9	491.0	18.8	.7	184.2	--	--	995	995	995	995	995	995	995	995	995	995	Long-Term Debt (\$mill)	995
Cash Assets	854.9	1056.2	1498.2	2154.8	2752.0	3251.8	4191.0	5378.5	5406.7	6595.1	7400	8340	9110	9610	10110	10610	11110	11610	Shr. Equity (\$mill)	12795
Receivables	15.2%	17.0%	19.0%	21.4%	21.4%	20.9%	19.8%	18.6%	21.2%	16.8%	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%	Return on Total Cap'l	15.5%
Inventory	25.9%	25.7%	23.8%	21.0%	21.3%	22.1%	19.8%	18.6%	21.2%	16.8%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	Return on Shr. Equity	16.5%
Other	24.4%	24.2%	22.5%	19.9%	20.3%	21.0%	18.7%	16.9%	18.7%	13.8%	14.0%	14.5%	14.5%	14.5%	14.5%	14.5%	14.5%	14.5%	Retained to Com Eq	14.0%
Current Assets	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	All Div'ds to Net Prof	16%

BUSINESS: Stryker Corp. develops, manufactures, and markets Orthopaedic Implants (61% of '09 sales), and MedSurg Equipment (39%). Orthopaedic products include hip, knee, trauma, spinal, and craniomaxillofacial implants. MedSurg includes powered instruments, endoscopic systems, other operating room devices, specialty stretchers, and maternity beds. Physical Therapy Services business sold '07. About 36% of '09 sales were foreign. R&D: 5.0% of '09 sales. '09 depr. rate: 19.6%. Has 18,582 employees. Off. and dir. (incl. Stryker family trust) own 30.7% of stock (3/10 proxy), 3 others aggregate 15.7%. Chairman, President, & CEO: Stephen MacMillan, Inc.: MI. Addr.: 2825 Airview Blvd, Kalamazoo, MI 49002. Telephone: 269-385-2600. Internet: www.stryker.com.

The top line is on track to post a healthy advance in 2010 at Stryker Corp. This medical device manufacturer's capital equipment group, MedSurg, has improved considerably in the June quarter, after experiencing a significant cutback in sales activity during the recession. Constrained hospital spending likely froze budgets, but not all purchases can be delayed indefinitely, as demonstrated by buyers entering the market once again. Similarly, shipments in the Orthopaedic Implants division also improved, likely thanks to the resurgence of previously postponed elective procedures. **Earnings should record a handsome advance, too.** Pricing has held relatively steady despite economic turmoil and competitive pressures, and because of a favorable product mix, margins will likely expand this year. In addition, Stryker has kept a lid on expenses while undertaking a necessary \$200 million compliance initiative, offsetting a potential drag on profits. Furthermore, a \$750 million share-repurchase program should help support share net over the next several years. **Stryker's diversified product line is a solid growth platform.** The company has turned a spotlight on device introductions to flesh out gaps and broaden the existing portfolio. One bright prospect, a customizable knee offering from business unit OtisMed, is poised for a rollout later this year, contingent on FDA clearance. Also, two new hip offerings are in the works, as are collaborations with newly acquired medical device reprocessor Ascent Healthcare. Moreover, a hearty cash balance should easily fund research and development initiatives (expected to climb 15% in 2010), or be utilized for outside growth ventures. **These timely shares are appealing to investors of many stripes.** SYK stock has dropped more than 15% in price since our May review and thus offers an enticing entry point. Substantial capital appreciation potential over the haul to 2013-2015 ought to appeal to the patient set, while short-term accounts will likely enjoy above-average market returns in the coming year. And, with Stryker's solid cash flow generation, investors are likely to enjoy boosts to the dividend as well. *Mary Beth Wieden Keller August 27, 2010*

Cal-endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Full Year
2007	1426	1464	1453	1658	6001
2008	1634	1713	1653	1718	6718
2009	1602	1634	1653	1834	6723
2010	1799	1758	1833	1860	7250
2011	1895	1935	1970	2000	7800

(A) Based on average shares through '96; diluted thereafter. Excludes extraordinary gains of \$0.03 in 1996. Excludes nonrecurring losses (gains): '98, \$0.57; '99, \$0.71; '01, \$0.01; '02, \$0.03; '04, \$0.29; '05, \$0.11; '06, 13c; '07, 4c; '08, 5c. Next earnings rpt. due mid-October. (B) Dividends paid quarterly beginning with December 2009 payment. (C) Includes intangibles. At 6/30/10: \$1586.9 million, \$4.00/share. (D) In millions, adjusted for stock splits.

Company's Financial Strength A++
Stock's Price Stability 90
Price Growth Persistence 75
Earnings Predictability 100

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by [Julie Stralow, CFA](#)

Analyst Note 08-18-2010 | by Debbie S. Wang

While Boston Scientific [BSX](#) management has indicated the firm is looking into a range of strategic options, including the sale of some of its product lines, it has remained mum about the specifics. Now rumors have surfaced that Boston is in serious negotiations with Stryker [SYK](#) to sell its neuromodulation business for \$1.4 billion-\$1.5 billion. We've pegged the value of Boston's neuromodulation unit at about \$1 billion in current indications, so if the rumors wind up being true, Stryker would be paying a substantial premium to what we think the segment is actually worth. In this case, we would consider trimming our fair value estimate for Stryker. Financially, though, Stryker would remain in fine shape, given its current \$3.0 billion net cash position. Strategically, we think Boston's neuromodulation unit could provide an interesting hedge for Stryker's exposure to spinal implants. With about 9% of its sales coming from its spine unit in 2009, Stryker has a big exposure to this controversial market, which is coming under pressure from third-party payers outside of stenosis and instability indications. If Stryker can capitalize on the chronic pain indications of neuromodulation, we think it could give practitioners another option for patients with severe lower back pain.

Currently, the neuromodulation market is heavily dominated by Medtronic [MDT](#), followed by St. Jude Medical [STJ](#) as the distant second, and Boston has trailed along in third place. Unlike its rivals, Boston has not consistently seen double-digit growth in its neuromodulation business. Even more alarming, the firm has not been investing in the development of this emerging technology, from our perspective. We are only starting to scratch the surface of how this technology can be used to address various health conditions. The neuromodulation market is currently most developed for chronic pain, a condition that crosses neurology, anesthesiology, and spinal surgery. But, there is potential to apply this technology to treatment-resistant depression, Parkinson's disease, obesity, fecal and urinary incontinence, and stroke. These additional applications of neuromodulation would push further into neurology, urology, and gastroenterology. Boston already has established relationships with practitioners of those specialties through its peripheral vascular and endosurgery product lines, but

Morningstar Rating
★★★★★

Stock Price
As of 08-18-2010
\$46.86

Fair Value Estimate
\$72.00

Consider Buying
\$50.40

Consider Selling
\$100.80

Fair Value Uncertainty
Medium

Economic Moat
Wide

Stewardship Grade
C

Bulls Say

- Stryker's balance sheet is filled with cash. Acquisitions to accelerate growth remain a key priority, but the firm could return value to shareholders by other means, as well.
- International operations in Stryker's MedSurg segment--operating room and other medical equipment--remain relatively small and provide a key growth opportunity.
- New products could boost growth in hips (ADM-X3 and Rejuvenate) and keep growth strong in knees (OtisMed's customization system).
- By acquiring Ascent, a leading reprocessor of single-use medical instruments, Stryker aims to provide a way for hospital administrators to lower

the firm has not done a good job of leveraging those ties to include its neuromodulation business. While Stryker probably wouldn't have any special edge for treating these emerging indications, its strong relationships with spinal surgeons could help it expand substantially in the markets Boston already serves. In the hands of an acquirer willing to push neuromodulation into all potential indications, we estimate Boston's neuromodulation business could be worth at least \$1.5 billion, depending on which additional indications are eventually approved.

In the end, though, if Boston does sell this unit, we would probably downgrade its economic moat. We expect neuromodulation technology to be a key growth driver for the next decade as it is applied to treat more chronic conditions. If Boston lacks the technology, it will be left at a substantial competitive disadvantage. There are also rumors that Boston may sell its neurovascular unit. Based on the \$2.6 billion Covidien COV recently paid for ev3's roughly \$500 million in annual sales, we put Boston's neurovascular business in the ballpark of \$1.5 billion. We think either Johnson & Johnson JNJ or C.R. Bard BCR could find that business unit attractive. Finally, from a credit standpoint, the addition of cash from this potential sale would alleviate Boston's refinancing risk over the next several years. As a result, we would consider bumping up Boston's credit rating.

Julie Stralow, CFA, contributed to this note.

Thesis 05-21-2010 | by Julie Stralow, CFA

Stryker excels in several orthopedic and medical equipment niches. We expect the firm to continue launching innovative new products to help expand these niches and its own profitability even further in the long run.

Around 60% of Stryker's revenue comes from orthopedic implants, where the firm is a top-tier provider of knees and hips and a growing provider of spinal implants. We think the orthopedic industry is very attractive because of its high barriers to success, and Stryker should be a key beneficiary of growth in surgical procedures to repair joints.

Demographic trends in developed countries should drive solid volume growth for the industry, as their populations age and suffer from the consequences of obesity trends. Although we are enthusiastic about orthopedic volume growth prospects, some uncertainty exists regarding ongoing pricing levels because of U.S. reform initiatives and growing national budget deficits worldwide, which could cause some key payers to scrutinize medical costs more intensely. However, even in our most dire scenarios, we think Stryker's returns on invested capital should remain higher than capital costs, primarily because of the positive characteristics of the orthopedic implant market.

The balance of Stryker's sales comes from tools and equipment to outfit surgical suites and regular hospital rooms. Stryker is particularly prolific in operating room products, including cutting tools, medical video equipment, and irrigation devices. These tools often complement its orthopedic devices and greatly improve the efficiency of surgical procedures. Stryker is even a top provider of

costs--an important consideration especially in an increasingly cost-conscious health-care environment.

Bears Say

- Health-care reform efforts could reduce long-term returns in Stryker's U.S. operations, which accounted for 64% of the firm's business in 2009.
- Although Stryker escaped most of the punishment when the Department of Justice targeted knee and hip providers, it might not be so lucky in future dealings with the DOJ, which has turned its attention to a key growth area for Stryker--the spine market.
- Although all outstanding Food and Drug Administration warning letters recently were lifted, Stryker is still working on improving the quality of its manufacturing operations, and there may be more bumps along the way.

medical beds and emergency equipment, such as stretchers. Although not as fundamentally attractive as implants and somewhat susceptible to economic cycles, these offerings often expand at faster rates than Stryker's orthopedic implant products. In the long run, we think that trend could continue, assuming the company expands as expected in international markets.

With its cash-rich balance sheet and admirable free cash-flow generation, Stryker remains in the enviable position of having many avenues to return value to shareholders. Stryker could significantly boost its dividend or repurchase shares at attractive prices to bolster investor returns with its substantial cash resources. Also, depending on the acquisition target, Stryker could use its big cash position to invest in new technology in fast-growing niches, boosting its growth potential.

Valuation

We're keeping our fair value estimate at \$72 per share. We assume sales growth rebounds to about 11% compounded annually through 2014. Specifically, we assume the orthopedic business grows 9% compounded annually during those years, which reflects solid growth from knees and hips and acceleration in the spine business as new product candidates are launched successfully. From a low base in 2009, we assume the MedSurg business follows the growth trends of the orthopedic business with a little boost from international expansion, causing 14% compound annual growth in that segment from 2009 to 2014. Our fair value estimate also depends on operating margins staying around 23% through 2012 and then dropping to about 22% after the U.S. device tax is implemented in 2014. These factors should lead to earnings per share increasing about 11% during that period. We discount our assumptions at 9.5%.

Risk

Economic concerns have disrupted Stryker's medical equipment segment recently, and caregivers may delay purchases in this segment--especially of big ticket items--in economic downturns. Also, many highly motivated and resource-rich firms compete with Stryker. If the company does not stay near the top of the innovation curve, it risks losing customers to those rivals. In the longer term, third-party payers may need to reduce payments for procedures in order to afford the expected uptick in procedure volume. If payment cuts trickle down to Stryker and it can't make comparable cost reductions, those cuts could damage returns on invested capital.

Close Competitors	TTM Sales \$Mil	Market Cap \$Mil
Stryker Corporation	7,045	18,525
* <u>Johnson & Johnson</u>	62,593	165,212
* <u>Smith & Nephew PLC</u>	3,935	8,084
* <u>Zimmer Holdings, Inc.</u>	4,203	9,845

* Morningstar Analyst Report Available

Strategy

Stryker hopes to arm hospitals and surgeons with the tools needed to successfully treat patients. Its broad product set includes orthopedic implants, operating room equipment, and medical furniture. By interacting with many departments in the hospital, Stryker aims to become a top supplier to medical caregivers. It also aims to acquire new businesses to ramp up growth and diversify sales.

Management & Stewardship

Although we think Stryker's stewards employ fair practices, outside shareholders should be aware of how little control they may have on Stryker's strategic direction. Stephen MacMillan heads the firm's executive team and board, which we think remains insulated. Even though the majority of the board pass U.S. independence standards; we think the average tenure on the board, a director's consulting relationship with Stryker, and the founding family's board seat and voting power override that litmus test. Because of those factors, the board's interests may not necessarily be naturally aligned with most shareholders' interests. Also, though we're glad variable compensation, such as bonuses and stock-related rewards, make up the vast majority of executive compensation, we'd prefer to see those rewards based on returns on invested capital or free cash flow rather than earnings per share, which can be easily manipulated and may not be a true measure of value creation. We do applaud Stryker's disclosure surrounding compensation and financial performance, however, and we find Stryker's annual orthopedic market report especially valuable.

Profile

Stryker develops, manufactures, and markets medical devices and equipment for use primarily in orthopedic procedures. The firm generates most of its revenue from reconstructive implants, such as knees and hips, but serves a variety of other orthopedic niches, including spine. Stryker also offers a wide range of operating room equipment and tools used for orthopedic and other procedures. Hospital beds and stretchers account for a portion of Stryker's sales, too.

Growth

We think new product launches and procedure growth should help Stryker grow 11% compounded annually through 2014. Acquisitions could add to that rate.

Profitability

Through major cost-control efforts, operating margins in recent quarters have risen past our long-term assumption of 22%. We think reform initiatives and increasing regulatory requirements could constrain Stryker's margins in the long run.

Financial Health

Stryker ended March with \$2.9 billion in net cash. With those substantial resources and ongoing cash flow, we expect it to return more value to shareholders or make acquisitions in fast-growing niches.

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