Position Close Update: Northrop Grumman (NOC)

Northrop Grumman (NOC) – Closing Short Position – up 8% vs. S&P up 9%

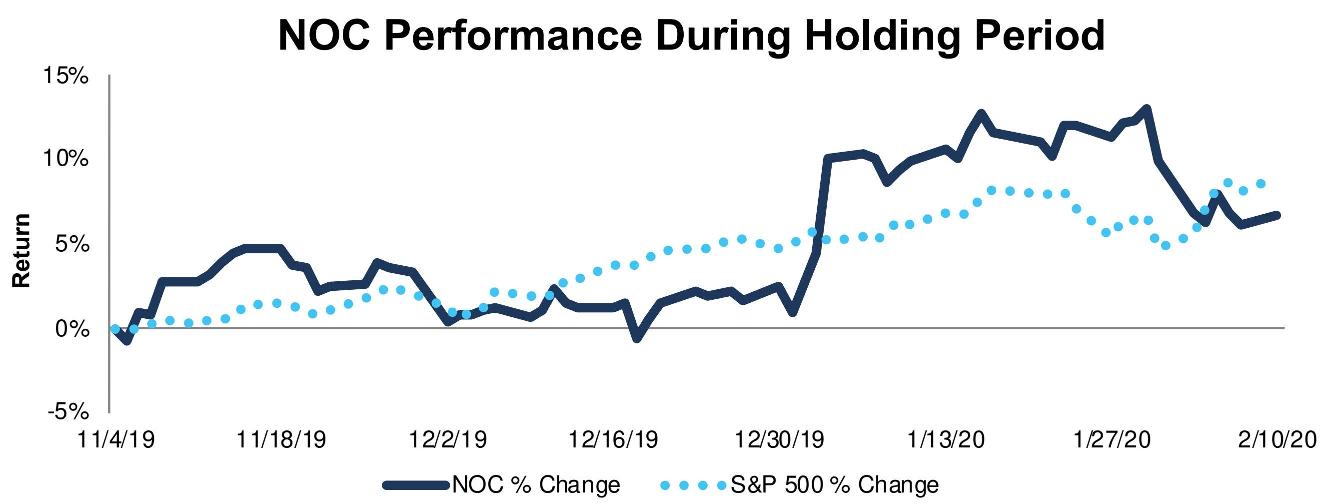
We put Northrop Grumman (NOC: $363/share) in the Danger Zone on November 4, 2019. At the time, NOC received an Unattractive rating and had significantly overstated TTM earnings due to high levels of earnings distortion. This report, along with all of our research, utilizes our "novel dataset"[1] of footnotes disclosures to get the truth about earnings, as shown in the Harvard Business School and MIT Sloan paper, "Core Earnings: New Data and Evidence."

Despite beating earnings expectations in its 4Q19 earnings release, NOC's revenue came in below expectations and the stock fell 6% in the three days after its earnings report. We recently parsed NOC's 2019 10-K and the stock now earns an Attractive Risk/Reward rating given its improved fundamentals and lower valuation.

During the 98-day holding period, NOC outperformed as a short position, rising 8% compared to a 9% gain for the S&P 500.

This lower valuation means the risk in this stock has decreased. We believe it is time to close this short position.

Figure 1: NOC vs. S&P 500 – Price Return – Successful Short Call



Sources: New Constructs, LLC and company filings
Note: Gain/Decline performance analysis excludes transaction costs and dividends.

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Disclosure: David Trainer, Kyle Guske II, and Matt Shuler receive no compensation to write about any specific stock, style, or theme.

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[1] In Core Earnings: New Data & Evidence, professors at Harvard Business School (HBS) & MIT Sloan empirically show that our "novel dataset" is superior to "Street Earnings" from Refinitiv's IBES, owned by Blackstone (BX) and Thomson Reuters (TRI), and "Income Before Special Items" from Compustat, owned by S&P Global (SPGI).

Footnotes adjustments matter. We are the ONLY source.

We provide ratings, models, reports & screeners on U.S. 3,000 stocks, 700 ETFs and 7,000 mutual funds.

HBS & MIT Sloan research reveals that:

- **Markets are inefficiently assessing earnings because no one reads the footnotes.**
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Combining human expertise with NLP/ML/AI technologies (featured by Harvard Business School), we shine a light in the dark corners (e.g. footnotes) of hundreds of thousands of financial filings to unearth critical details.

The HBS & MIT Sloan paper, Core Earnings: New Data and Evidence, shows how our superior data drives uniquely comprehensive and independent debt and equity research.

This paper compares our analytics on a mega cap company to other major providers. The Appendix details exactly how we stack up.

Learn more.

Quotes from HBS & MIT Sloan professors on our research:

Get better research:

"…the NC dataset provides a novel opportunity to study the properties of non-operating items disclosed in 10-Ks, and to examine the extent to which the market impounds their implications." – page 20

Pick better stocks:

"Trading strategies that exploit cross-sectional differences in firms' transitory earnings produce abnormal returns of 7-to-10% per year." – Abstract

Avoid losses from using other firms' data:

"…many of the income-statement-relevant quantitative disclosures collected by NC do not appear to be easily identifiable in Compustat…" – page 14

Build better models:

"Core Earnings [calculated using New Constructs' novel dataset] provides predictive power for various measures of one-year-ahead performance…that is incremental to their current-period counterparts." – page 4

Exploit market inefficiencies:

"These results … suggest that the adjustments made by analysts and Compustat to better capture core earnings are incomplete. Moreover, the non-core items identified by NC produce a measure of core earnings that is incremental to alternative measures of operating performance in predicting an array of future income measures." – page 26

Fulfill fiduciary duties:

"An appropriate measure of accounting performance for purposes of forecasting future performance requires detailed analysis of all quantitative performance disclosures detailed in the annual report, including those reported only in the footnotes and in the MD&A." – page 33-34

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