



## Position Close Update: Western Union (WU)

**Western Union (WU) – Closing Long Position – up 12% vs. S&P up 57%**

We made Western Union (WU: \$22/share) a Long Idea on [September 12, 2018](#) and reiterated our opinion on [October 2, 2019](#). At the time of both reports, WU earned a Very Attractive [rating](#). We believed Western Union’s GAAP earnings understated its true profits, regulations across the industry provided a strong competitive moat, and the stock traded at a significant discount.

This report, along with all of our research<sup>1</sup>, leverages our [more reliable fundamental data](#)<sup>2</sup> to get the truth about earnings, as shown in the Journal of Financial Economics paper, “[Core Earnings: New Data and Evidence](#).”

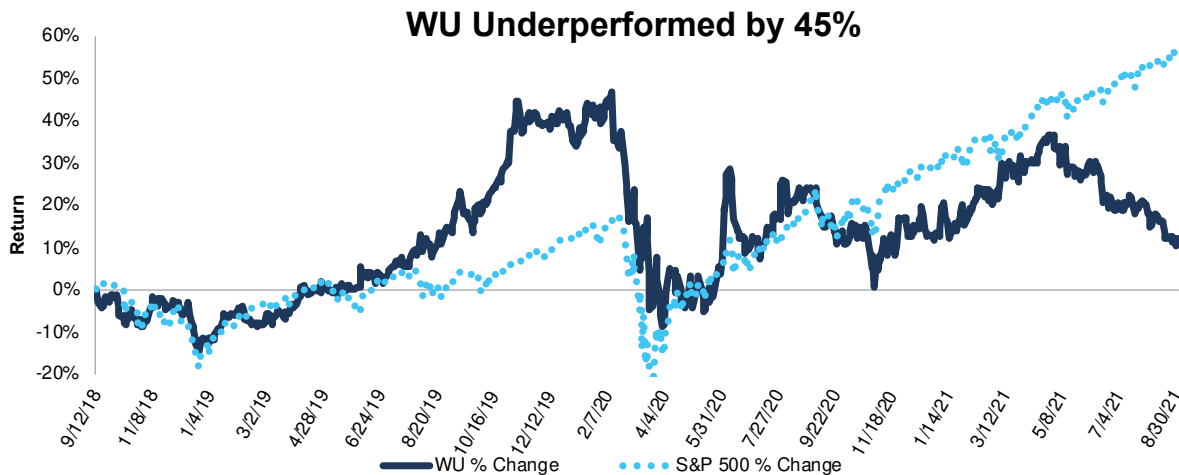
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During the nearly 3 year holding period, WU underperformed as a long position, rising 12% compared to a 57% gain for the S&P 500.

While the firm still earns a Very Attractive rating, its business has shown weakness in recent years, with revenue falling year-over-year in three of the past five years and growing just 1% and 2% YoY in the other years. Rapidly changing payment technologies, growth in decentralized finance, and the ubiquity of payment transfer platforms pose further challenges going forward.

With headwinds facing the business, the stock no longer provides the same risk/reward it once did, and we’re closing this long position.

**Figure 1: WU vs. S&P 500 – Price Return – Unsuccessful Long Idea**



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 Alex Sword receive no compensation to write about any specific stock, style, or theme.*

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<sup>1</sup> Harvard Business School features our Robo-Analyst research automation technology in the case [New Constructs: Disrupting Fundamental Analysis with Robo-Analysts](#).

<sup>2</sup> Three independent studies from respected institutions prove the superiority of our data, models, and ratings. Learn more [here](#).



## **It's Official: We Offer the Best Fundamental Data in the World**

Many firms claim their research is superior, but none of them can prove it with independent studies from highly-respected institutions as we can. Three different papers from both the public and private sectors show:

1. Legacy fundamental datasets suffer from significant inaccuracies, omissions and biases.
2. Only our “novel database” enables investors to overcome these flaws and apply [reliable](#) fundamental data in their research.
3. Our proprietary measures of [Core Earnings](#) and [Earnings Distortion](#) materially improve stock picking and forecasting of profits.

### **Best Fundamental Data in the World**

Forthcoming in [The Journal of Financial Economics](#), a top peer-reviewed journal, [Core Earnings: New Data & Evidence](#) proves our Robo-Analyst technology overcomes material shortcomings in legacy firms' data collection processes to provide superior [fundamental data](#), [earnings](#) models, and [research](#). More [details](#).

Key quotes from the paper:

- “[New Constructs’] *Total Adjustments* differs significantly from the items identified and excluded from Compustat’s adjusted earnings measures. For example... 50% to 70% of the variation in *Total Adjustments* is not explained by S&P Global’s (SPGI) *Adjustments* individually.” – pp. 14, 1<sup>st</sup> para.
- “A final source of differences [between New Constructs’ and S&P Global’s data] is due to data collection oversights...we identified cases where Compustat did not collect information relating to firms’ income that is useful in assessing core earnings.” – pp. 16, 2<sup>nd</sup> para.

### **Superior Models**

A top accounting firm features the superiority of our ROIC, NOPAT and Invested Capital research to Capital IQ & Bloomberg’s in [Getting ROIC Right](#). See the [Appendix](#) for direct comparison details.

Key quotes from the paper:

- “...an accurate calculation of ROIC requires more diligence than often occurs in some of the common, off-the-shelf ROIC calculations. Only by scouring the footnotes and the MD&A [ as New Constructs does] can investors get an accurate calculation of ROIC.” – pp. 8, 5<sup>th</sup> para.
- “The majority of the difference...comes from New Constructs’ machine learning approach, which leverages technology to calculate ROIC by applying accounting adjustments that may be buried deeply in the footnotes across thousands of companies.” – pp. 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> para.

### **Superior Stock Ratings**

Robo-Analysts’ stock ratings outperform those from human analysts as shown in this [paper](#) from Indiana’s Kelley School of Business. Bloomberg features the paper [here](#).

Key quotes from the paper:

- “the portfolios formed following the buy recommendations of Robo-Analysts earn abnormal returns that are statistically and economically significant.” – pp. 6, 3<sup>rd</sup> para.
- “Our results ultimately suggest that Robo-Analysts are a valuable, alternative information intermediary to traditional sell-side analysts.” – pp. 20, 3<sup>rd</sup> para.

Our mission is to provide the best fundamental analysis of public and private businesses in the world and make it affordable for all investors, not just Wall Street insiders.

We believe every investor deserves to know the whole truth about the profitability and valuation of any company they consider for investment. More details on our cutting-edge technology and how we use it are [here](#).



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