



Franklin Resources (BEN)

Updated October 25th, 2019 by Eli Inkrot

Key Metrics

Current Price:	\$28	5 Year CAGR Estimate:	7.1%	Volatility Percentile:	58.9%
Fair Value Price:	\$30	5 Year Growth Estimate:	2.0%	Momentum Percentile:	19.8%
% Fair Value:	92%	5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:	1.8%	Growth Percentile:	10.4%
Dividend Yield:	3.8%	5 Year Price Target	\$33	Valuation Percentile:	75.4%
Dividend Risk Score:	X	Retirement Suitability Score:	X	Total Return Percentile:	51.7%

Overview & Current Events

Franklin Resources, founded in 1947 and headquartered in San Mateo, CA, is a global asset manager with a long and successful history. The company offers investment management (which makes up the bulk of fees the company collects) and related services to its customers, including sales, distribution, and shareholder servicing. As of September 30th, 2019, assets under management (AUM) totaled \$692.6 billion for the \$14 billion market cap company.

On October 25th, Franklin Resources reported Q4 and full year fiscal 2019 results for the period ending September 30th, 2019. Total assets under management equaled \$692.6 billion, a -\$22.6 billion decline from the previous quarter, due to -\$12.8 billion of net outflows and -\$9.8 billion of market change. Negative net flows are an item Franklin Resources has faced for several quarters in a row. For the quarter, Operating Revenue totaled \$1.45 billion, down -5% from Q4 fiscal 2018. Net income equaled \$306.4 million or \$0.61 per share, compared to \$502.5 million or \$0.96 per share in the year ago period. However, Q4 2018 included a \$89.6 million or \$0.17 per share benefit due to Tax Reform. For the year, Operating Revenue totaled \$5.77 billion, down -9% from fiscal 2018, representing 0.83% of ending AUM. Net income equaled \$1.196 billion, with earnings-per-share coming in at \$2.35. On an adjusted basis, earnings-per-share equaled \$2.52 compared to \$3.38 in the prior year.

Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2025
EPS	\$2.12	\$2.89	\$2.99	\$3.37	\$3.79	\$3.29	\$2.94	\$3.01	\$3.38	\$2.52	\$2.75	\$3.04
DPS	\$0.29	\$0.33	\$0.36	\$0.39	\$0.46	\$0.57	\$0.69	\$0.78	\$0.89	\$1.01	\$1.04	\$1.21
Shares¹	672	653	637	631	623	604	570	555	519	504	495	470

During the 2007 - 2018 period, Franklin Resources grew earnings-per-share by a compound rate of 3.3% per annum. The biggest growth segment in the asset management industry is ETFs, which have much lower expense ratios than actively managed funds. Franklin's actively managed funds have performed well, which serves as an advantage versus other active asset managers; however, low-cost passive funds are the true competition. The rise of ETF investing will be a challenging headwind for the entire industry. The "race to the bottom" as it relates to fees, is good for investors but not asset managers. We expect assets under management to stabilize somewhat with asset prices. However, if Franklin Resources has to keep lowering its management fees, stable AUM will still lead to declining net income, all else equal.

A counterpoint to this notion is that the Franklin Resources has an exceptional balance sheet, allowing the company to repurchase significant blocks of stock and work towards a solution in the changing asset management industry. Taking these items collectively, we are forecasting 2% annual growth over the intermediate-term.

Valuation Analysis

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Now	2025
Avg. P/E	16.4	13.9	12.3	14.0	14.4	15.4	12.4	13.7	11.1	12.8	10.1	11.0
Avg. Yld.	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	1.1%	1.9%	1.9%	2.4%	3.1%	3.8%	3.6%

¹ In millions.

Disclosure: This analyst is long the security discussed in this research report.



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Over the past decade shares of Franklin Resources have traded with an average P/E ratio of 13 to 14 times earnings. We are using 11 times earnings as our beginning baseline, as asset managers are facing substantial headwinds in the way of falling asset management fees. That being said, this multiple could be too conservative given Franklin's immense financial power. Still, with shares trading near 10 times earnings, this implies the potential for a small valuation tailwind. The dividend is also worth mentioning. Not only is the 3.8% starting yield very well covered, Franklin Resources also has a tendency to periodically pay out a special dividend. While we have not included this in our forecast, investors may very well receive a yield in excess of the stated payout.

Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2025
Payout	14%	11%	12%	12%	12%	17%	23%	26%	26%	40%	38%	40%

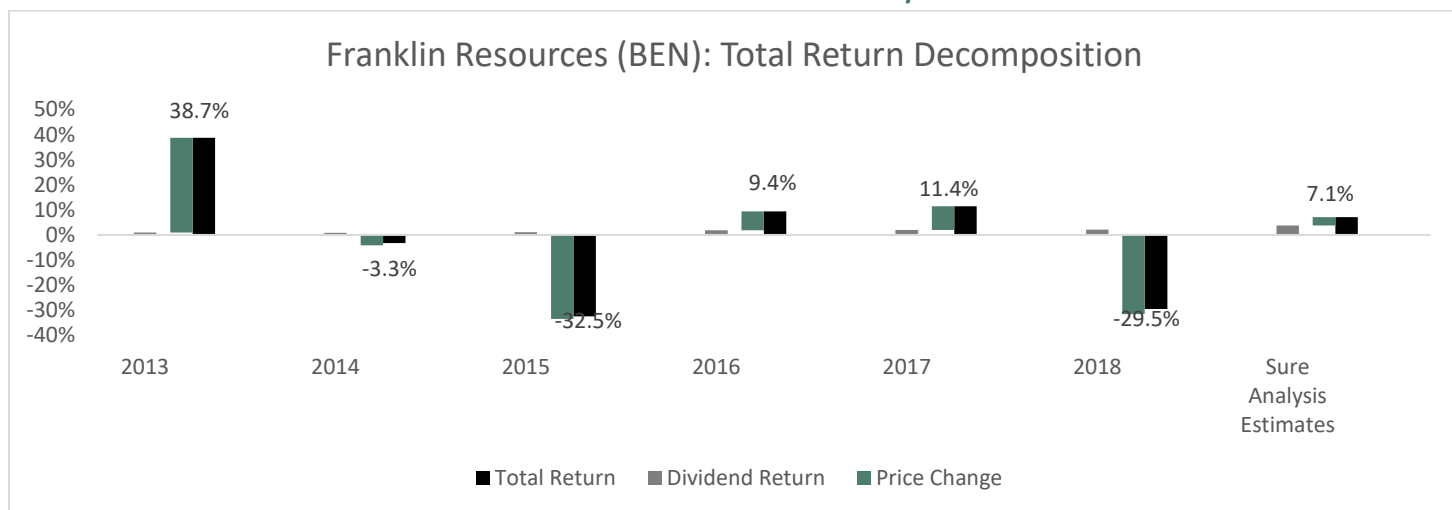
Franklin Resources' funds have performed well over the long-term, but we do not believe the company has a meaningful competitive advantage in its field. Indeed, Franklin Resources needs to adapt to the trend towards low-cost passive ETF's to remain competitive. Unless a novel solution is found, this could mean declining profits in the years to come.

The dividend payout ratio has never been especially high, which has allowed the company to retire a meaningful amount of shares and pay the occasional special dividend. Lately the payout ratio has inched upward toward the 40% mark, but this payment is still very well covered. Indeed, Franklin Resources has perhaps one of the best balance sheets in our coverage universe. Last quarter, the company held \$5.5 billion in cash and \$14.5 billion in total assets against total liabilities of \$3.1 billion. While a moderate amount of debt is held (~\$700 million) annual earnings power is twice this amount and cash on hand alone easily covers all liabilities.

Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Shares are up marginally since our last report. Franklin Resources is a classic asset manager that has to battle the rise of low-cost ETF investing, which has been responsible for customers moving money from actively managed funds to ETFs. The company is in an interesting situation where the core business is declining, but the financial foundation – allowing for share repurchases and above average payouts – is exceptional. Total return potential comes in at 7.1% per annum, stemming from 2% growth, a 3.8% dividend yield and the possibility of a small valuation tailwind. We acknowledge the challenges facing the business, but we are enthused by the sound financial footing of the company. As a result of a lower total return expectation, we are reducing our rating from buy to hold.

Total Return Breakdown by Year



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Income Statement Metrics

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Revenue	4194	5853	7140	7101	7985	8491	7949	6618	6392	6319
Gross Profit	2842	3570	3196	3106	3558	3935	3733	3047	2928	2889
Gross Margin	67.8%	61.0%	44.8%	43.7%	44.6%	46.3%	47.0%	46.0%	45.8%	45.7%
SG&A Exp.	1349	1316	363	408	446	498	481	474	444	526
D&A Exp.	181	267	88	82	94	95	97	87	80	76
Operating Profit	1203	2089	2660	2515	2921	3221	3028	2366	2264	2119
Operating Margin	28.7%	35.7%	37.3%	35.4%	36.6%	37.9%	38.1%	35.7%	35.4%	33.5%
Net Profit	897	1446	1924	1931	2150	2384	2035	1727	1697	764
Net Margin	21.4%	24.7%	26.9%	27.2%	26.9%	28.1%	25.6%	26.1%	26.5%	12.1%
Free Cash Flow	597	1594	1490	988	1974	2085	2183	1630	1061	2123
Income Tax	384	618	803	763	856	998	924	742	759	1473

Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Assets	9468	10708	13776	14752	15390	16357	16336	16099	17534	14384
Cash & Equivalents	2983	3985	5199	4491	6323	7596	8368	8483	8750	6911
Accounts Receivable	N/A	N/A	773	850	1039	950	838	794	1002	848
Goodwill & Int. Ass.	2005	2007	2148	2142	2359	2326	2257	2211	2228	2333
Total Liabilities	1769	2958	4653	4991	4705	4145	3840	3571	4598	4176
Accounts Payable	394	547	266	242	274	238	232	233	292	227
Long-Term Debt	64	980	2201	2777	2295	2149	2155	2083	1098	729
Shareholder's Equity	7632	7727	8525	9201	10073	11584	11841	11936	12620	9899
D/E Ratio	0.01	0.13	0.26	0.30	0.23	0.19	0.18	0.17	0.09	0.07

Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Return on Assets	9.6%	14.3%	15.7%	13.5%	14.3%	15.0%	12.5%	10.6%	10.1%	4.8%
Return on Equity	12.2%	18.8%	23.7%	21.8%	22.3%	22.0%	17.4%	14.5%	13.8%	6.8%
ROIC	11.9%	17.5%	19.2%	16.2%	16.9%	17.4%	14.0%	11.8%	11.8%	6.1%
Shares Out.	688	672	653	637	631	623	604	570	555	522
Revenue/Share	6.04	8.58	10.72	11.04	12.59	13.58	12.93	11.34	11.43	11.75
FCF/Share	0.86	2.34	2.24	1.54	3.11	3.33	3.55	2.79	1.90	3.95

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.

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