



# Blackstone Group Inc. (BX)

Updated October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, by Nikolaos Sismanis

## Key Metrics

<b>Current Price:</b>	\$138	<b>5 Year CAGR Estimate:</b>	4.6%	<b>Market Cap:</b>	\$96.4 B
<b>Fair Value Price:</b>	\$92	<b>5 Year Growth Estimate:</b>	10.0%	<b>Ex-Dividend Date:</b>	10/29/21
<b>% Fair Value:</b>	150%	<b>5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:</b>	-7.7%	<b>Dividend Payment Date:</b>	10/08/21
<b>Dividend Yield:</b>	3.2%	<b>5 Year Price Target</b>	\$148	<b>Years Of Dividend Growth:</b>	N/A
<b>Dividend Risk Score:</b>	F	<b>Retirement Suitability Score:</b>	F	<b>Last Dividend Increase:</b>	N/A

## Overview & Current Events

Blackstone, founded in 1985 by Peter Peterson and Stephen Schwarzman (still CEO), is one of the world's leading investment firms. At the end of 2020 the company held \$619 billion in assets under management (AUM), operating in Private Equity (32% of AUM), Real Estate (30%), Credit (25%) and Hedge Fund Solutions (13%). Today the \$96.4 billion market cap company employs about 2,600 people.

Note that the BX ticker previously represented an underlying unitholder interest in Blackstone, with the company acting as a general partner. However, on July 1st, 2019 Blackstone completed its transformation from a publicly traded partnership to a corporation. This move eliminated the Schedule K-1, replacing it with a Form 1099-DIV, and is intended to improve the market for the company's shares. This report marks the company's ninth quarter as a corporation.

On October 21st, 2021, Blackstone reported Q3-2021 results for the period ending September 30th, 2021. For the quarter, total revenue equaled \$6.2 billion, 107% higher year-over-year, powered by strong growth in both advisory fees and massive growth in investment income. Specifically, management and advisory fees grew 25.7% to \$1.32 billion, while investment income spiked 123% compared to Q3-2020. Distributable earnings totaled \$1.6 billion or \$01.28 per share, up 112% year-over-year.

Distributable earnings over the last twelve months have equaled \$5.4 billion or \$4.19 per share. Total assets under management equaled \$730.7 billion, up 25% year-over-year, driven by \$35.7 billion in inflows. Blackstone also declared a quarterly dividend of \$1.09. Overall, Blackstone reported the best results in its 36-year history. Earnings increased dramatically, and all of its key financial and capital metrics reached record or near-record levels. We expect distributable EPS of \$4.60 for FY2021.

## Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2026
<b>EPS</b>	\$1.23	\$1.72	\$3.08	\$3.76	\$1.82	\$2.00	\$2.81	\$2.26	\$2.31	\$2.65	<b>\$4.60</b>	<b>\$7.41</b>
<b>DPS</b>	\$0.62	\$0.52	\$1.18	\$1.92	\$2.90	\$1.66	\$2.32	\$2.42	\$1.92	\$1.91	<b>\$4.36</b>	<b>\$5.05</b>
<b>Shares<sup>1</sup></b>	489	556	573	596	624	643	659	663	680	684	<b>721</b>	<b>730</b>

Note that the table above shows earnings-per-unit, distributions-per-unit and units outstanding through 2018, reflecting the previous partnership format. In addition, Blackstone had previously reported economic net income, but is no longer doing so. With the transition to a corporation complete, we are using distributable earnings as our baseline.

Blackstone's performance fees tend to be lumpy, which in turn leads to irregular results. From 2010 through 2018, earnings-per-unit grew by a compound average rate of 7.6% per annum, however this varied widely from \$1.26 all the way up to \$3.76 and back down to \$2.26. The COVID-19 pandemic has pressured most companies, but we are encouraged by Blackstone's prior fundraising and \$127.2 billion in "dry powder capital" set to deploy.

After Q3 results, we are forecasting a 10% distributable EPS CAGR in the medium term, which implies a substantial deceleration from Blackstone's sequential growth and record results over the past few quarters. We remain prudent, nonetheless, as Blackstone's performance can be easily swayed by the underlying market conditions. Alongside a lumpy

<sup>1</sup> In millions.

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earnings pattern, the distribution / dividend has been up and down as well. Our estimate uses the next-twelve-month payout (\$4.36), which includes the most recent \$1.09 dividend declaration.

## Valuation Analysis

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Now	2026
Avg. P/E	12.7	8.3	7.4	8.6	20.2	13.2	11.3	14.9	14.4	18.6	29.9	20.0
Avg. Yld.	4.0%	3.6%	5.2%	5.9%	7.9%	6.3%	7.3%	7.2%	4.4%	3.9%	3.2%	3.4%

We are using a fair value multiple of 20 times earnings taking into consideration the transformation from a partnership to a corporation, along with the security's uneven history and favorably evolving growth prospects. With shares presently trading nearly 30 times estimated earnings, this implies the potential for a significant valuation headwind. Meanwhile, the 3.2% dividend yield will aid returns, but we do note that while this payment appears solid, it can fluctuate significantly in the years to come.

## Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2026
Payout	50%	30%	38%	51%	159%	83%	83%	107%	83%	72%	95%	68%

Blackstone did not fare particularly well during the last recession, posting a loss of -\$1.03 per unit in 2008. Moreover, the distribution went from \$1.20 in 2008 down to \$0.90 in 2009 and \$0.60 in 2010. However, the company recovered well, generating solid growth from 2009 through 2014. Recently results have been rapidly accelerating.

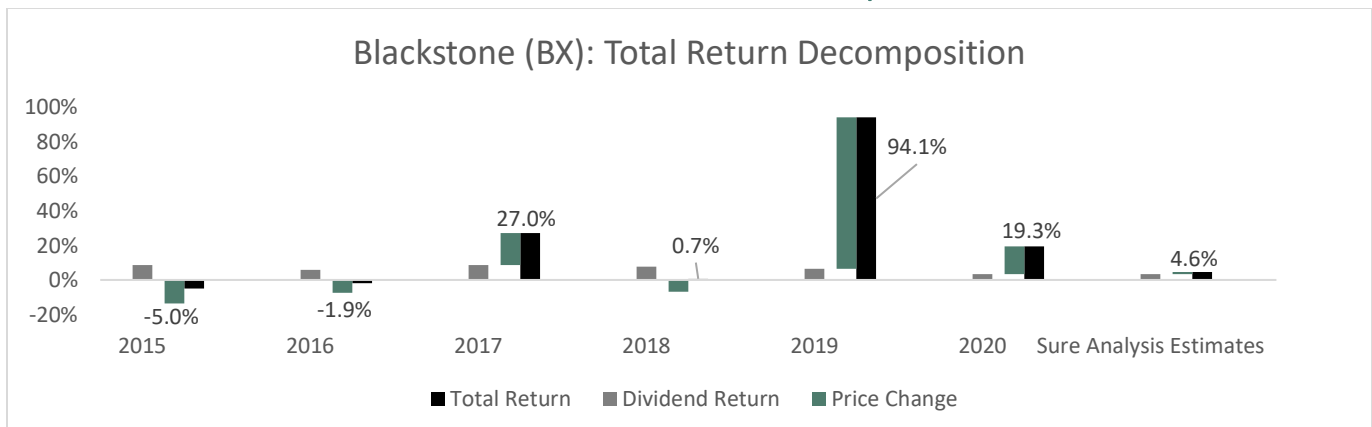
The company does possess a competitive advantage in that it is the largest alternative investment firm in the world. If you're looking to invest outside of the conventional equity space, which is a trend that has been going on for some time, Blackstone has a leading seat at the table; especially for large institutional firms looking for stability.

As of Q3 2021, Blackstone held \$8.2 billion in cash and equivalents and \$18.4 billion in cash and net investments, or \$15.26 per share. Blackstone has a \$2.3 billion undrawn credit revolver and maintains A+ ratings from S&P and Fitch.

## Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Blackstone's shares have more than doubled over the past year, with the company reporting skyrocketing sequential growth rates. Blackstone has built itself into a leading alternative asset manager, an area that has grown in recent years and has not yet been subjected to the "race to the bottom" as it relates to fee income. With that said, expect volatile results and drawdowns during recessions. Total return potential comes in at 4.6% per annum, stemming from 1.3% growth and a 3.2% dividend yield offset by the possibility of a notable valuation headwind. Shares earn a sell rating.

## Total Return Breakdown by Year



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## Income Statement Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Revenue</b>	3253	4019	6613	7485	4647	5051	7005	6661	6861	5966
<b>SG&amp;A Exp.</b>	3330	3188	3759	3734	2946	594	621	673	673	725
<b>D&amp;A Exp.</b>	208	139	96	102	101	83	47	59	59	71
<b>Operating Profit</b>	-168	219	1171	1585	710	1039	1471	1542	1542	1045
<b>Op. Margin</b>	-5.2%	5.4%	17.7%	21.2%	15.3%	20.6%	21.0%	23.1%	22.5%	17.5%
<b>Free Cash Flow</b>	1063	546	3522	1625	2338	-110	-1651	27	27	1824
<b>Income Tax</b>	346	185	256	291	190	132	743	249	249	356

## Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total Assets</b>	21909	28932	29679	31497	22526	26403	34416	28925	28925	26270
<b>Cash &amp; Equivalents</b>	755	710	832	1412	1837	1837	1992	2208	2208	1999
<b>Accounts Receivable</b>	406	638	888	559	613	773	875	636	---	---
<b>Goodwill &amp; Int. Ass.</b>	2299	2302	2348	2246	2064	1981	2188	2338	2338	2249
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	12657	17717	15301	14164	10296	13888	20904	15312	15312	11740
<b>Accounts Payable</b>	829		872	1195	649	1082	2044	876	876	717
<b>Long-Term Debt</b>	8868	13051	10467	8924	6117	8866	14815	9952	9952	6342
<b>Shareholder's Equity</b>	7131	8215	9963	11476	9638	9901	6634	6379	6379	6652

## Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Return on Assets</b>	-0.8%	0.9%	4.0%	5.2%	2.6%	4.2%	4.8%	4.9%	4.9%	3.6%
<b>Return on Equity</b>	-2.4%	2.8%	12.9%	14.8%	6.7%	10.6%	17.8%	23.7%	23.7%	15.3%
<b>Shares Out.</b>	489	556	573	596	624	643	659	670	680	697
<b>Revenue/Share</b>	6.84	7.46	11.20	12.21	3.91	4.23	10.51	5.52	5.68	8.56
<b>FCF/Share</b>	2.24	1.01	5.96	2.65	1.97	-0.09	-2.48	0.02	0.02	2.62

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

### Disclaimer

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