



# Kontoor Brands Inc. (KTB)

Updated March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 by Jonathan Weber

## Key Metrics

|                             |      |                                            |      |                                  |                       |
|-----------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Current Price:</b>       | \$44 | <b>5 Year CAGR Estimate:</b>               | 9.3% | <b>Market Cap:</b>               | \$2.6B                |
| <b>Fair Value Price:</b>    | \$52 | <b>5 Year Growth Estimate:</b>             | 2.5% | <b>Ex-Dividend Date:</b>         | 06/07/22 <sup>1</sup> |
| <b>% Fair Value:</b>        | 85%  | <b>5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:</b> | 3.3% | <b>Dividend Payment Date:</b>    | 06/18/22 <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>Dividend Yield:</b>      | 4.2% | <b>5 Year Price Target</b>                 | \$58 | <b>Years Of Dividend Growth:</b> | 1                     |
| <b>Dividend Risk Score:</b> | D    | <b>Retirement Suitability Score:</b>       | C    | <b>Last Dividend Increase:</b>   | 15.0%                 |

## Overview & Current Events

Kontoor Brands is an apparel company that focuses on what it calls “lifestyle apparel”. The company, which was spun off from V.F. Corporation (VFC) in 2019, owns some of the world’s most iconic denim brands, including *Wrangler*, *Lee*, and *Rock & Republic*. Kontoor Brands is a US-focused company, just around 30% of its revenues are generated outside of the United States. Kontoor is headquartered in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Kontoor Brands reported its fourth quarter financial results on March 9. The company reported that its revenue grew by 3% compared to the previous year’s quarter, to \$680 million. Revenues came in \$5 million lower than what the analyst community had forecasted. Kontoor Brands’ revenues grew thanks to strong consumer spending in the quarter, but the growth rate was lower compared to the previous quarter, where the year-over-year increase was more meaningful.

Kontoor Brands’ earnings-per-share totaled \$0.88 during the fourth quarter, beating the analyst consensus estimate by a sizeable \$0.11. Kontoor Brands’ revenue growth could not be turned into an attractive earnings growth rate. In fact, Kontoor Brands’ earnings-per-share were actually down from the \$1.23 the company earned during the previous year’s quarter. This can be explained by some pressure on the company’s margins, stemming primarily from higher operating expenses due to the company’s global ERP implementation. Inflation played a role as well, putting some pressure on Kontoor’s gross margins. Kontoor Brands still delivered strong earnings-per-share growth in 2021, overall, as profits soared 64% compared to 2020. For the current year, the outlook is positive as well. Management expects a revenue increase in the high-single digits, and earnings-per-share are forecasted at \$4.65 to \$4.75.

## Growth on a Per-Share Basis

| Year                      | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022          | 2027          |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>EPS</b>                | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | \$3.84 | \$2.61 | \$4.28 | <b>\$4.70</b> | <b>\$5.32</b> |
| <b>DPS</b>                | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | \$2.24 | \$0.96 | \$1.66 | <b>\$1.84</b> | <b>\$2.13</b> |
| <b>Shares<sup>3</sup></b> | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | 57.9   | 58.4   | 58.8   | <b>59.0</b>   | <b>60.0</b>   |

Kontoor Brands was spun off not too long ago, thus there is no long-term data available. Due to the nature of the industry Kontoor Brands is active in, it has to be expected that this is a vulnerable business during recessions.

For 2020, Kontoor Brands forecasted solid results before the coronavirus emerged, although the divestment of some business lines was seen as a headwind to revenues and profits. Management had previously forecasted revenue growth in the low-single-digits for 2020 and 2021, before the pandemic emerged.

The spread of the virus in the US and around the world hurt Kontoor Brands’ fiscal 2020 results badly, although the back half of the year was not too bad, thanks to the fact that stores started to reopen, which allowed Kontoor Brands to sell more merchandise. This allowed the company to still be profitable in 2020, despite major headwinds. With the impact of the pandemic passing, Kontoor has recover to substantially higher profitability levels once again.

<sup>1</sup> Estimated date

<sup>2</sup> Estimated date

<sup>3</sup> In Millions

Disclosure: This analyst has no position in the security discussed in this research report, and no plans to initiate one in the next 72 hours.



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## Valuation Analysis

| Year      | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Now  | 2027 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Avg. P/E  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | 10.9 | 15.7 | 11.9 | 9.4  | 11.0 |
| Avg. Yld. | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | 5.3% | 3.9% | 3.3% | 4.2% | 3.6% |

Finding a fair value for Kontoor Brands is difficult because it does not have a long history as a standalone company. We can, however, look at the historical valuation of its prior parent company. V.F. Corporation has mostly traded at a high-teens multiple in the past. Since Kontoor Brands was created to separate V.F. Corporation's slow-growing legacy brands from its faster-growing core businesses, Kontoor Brands should trade at a discount to that. Based on our current earnings estimate, we feel that shares are trading below fair value at the current high single digits earnings multiple.

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

| Year   | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  | 2022  | 2027  |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Payout | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | N/A  | 58.3% | 36.8% | 38.8% | 39.1% | 40.1% |

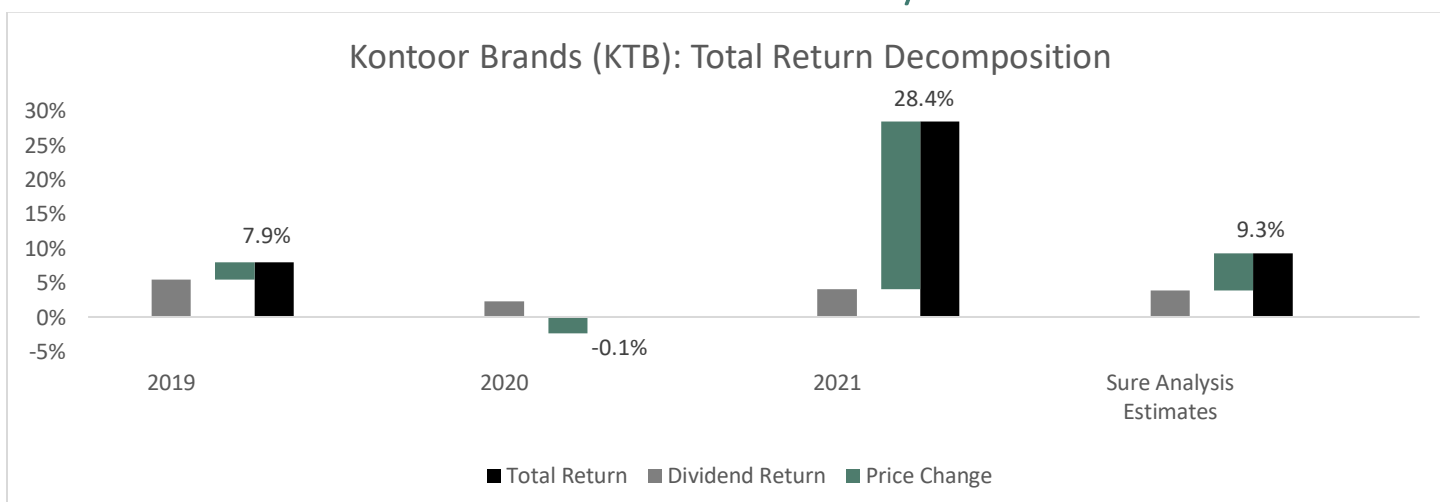
Kontoor Brands' investment case was primarily centered on a high dividend yield that looked like it was covered in a solid way before the current crisis, which devastated the industry. The dividend has been reinstated following a suspension during the peak of the pandemic, but the new payout is lower compared to pre-crisis dividend levels.

Kontoor Brands' competitive advantage lies in its ownership of some of the world's most popular denim brands, *Lee's* and *Wrangler* in particular control a large amount of market share in the denim category. The company is vulnerable to economic downturns, which is being showcased during the current pandemic.

## Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Kontoor Brands is a consumer goods company that was created through a spin-off of some low-growth businesses. We believe that the company's earnings and revenues could continue to grow slightly in the coming years. Shares are, trading below our fair value estimate right now, and forecasted total returns look compelling, at more than 9%. We therefore rate Kontoor Brands a buy at current prices.

## Total Return Breakdown by Year



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