



Results Note RM3.30 @ 25 February 2021

"Downgrade to SELL on earnings cut and lower target PER"

Share price performance



	1M	3M	12M
Absolute (%)	-4.1	-10.8	40.4
Rel KLCI (%)	-4.4	-9.9	33.3

	BUY	HOLD	SELL
Consensus	1	1	1
Course: Pleambara			

Stock Data

Sector	Healthcare &
	Pharmaceuticals
Issued shares (m)	475.2
Mkt cap (RMm)/(US\$m)	1,568.3/388.2
Avg daily vol - 6mth (m)	0.2
52-wk range (RM)	1.77-4.55
Est free float	19.3%
Stock Beta	0.78
Net cash/(debt) (RMm)	145.2
ROE (CY21E)	12.3%
Derivatives	No
Shariah Compliant	Yes

Key Shareholders

Apex Pharmacy Holding	40.1%
Washington H Soul	29.9%
Source: Affin Hwang, Bloomberg	

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Apex Healthcare (APEX MK)

SELL (downgrade)
Up/Downside: -15.2%

Price Target: RM2.80

Previous Target (Rating): RM3.80 (HOLD)

Downgrading: slower-than-expected revenue recovery

- ➤ Notwithstanding a weaker 4Q20 revenue of RM162m (lowest since 1Q17), Apex's 4Q20 core net profit grew by 3% yoy (+1% qoq) on lower operating costs and higher associate earnings
- > 2020 core net profit of RM55m (+5.7% yoy) was within our expectation
- ➤ We cut our 2021-22E earnings forecasts by 3-14% after incorporating a less bullish revenue growth trajectory. Separately, we lowered our target PER to 22x (from 29x) in anticipation of a gradual shift in investor focus to recovery plays / undervalued companies. Downgrade Apex to SELL.

Earnings were in line – lower operating costs and higher associate earnings cushioned revenue disappointment

Notwithstanding a weaker 4Q20 revenue of RM161.6m (-5.3% yoy / -4.5% qoq), Apex's 4Q20 core net profit grew by 3% yoy / 1.4% qoq to RM14.3m on lower operating costs and higher associate earnings. Apex's 2020 core net profit of RM55.3m (+5.7% yoy) was within market and our expectations. The group declared a higher final dividend of 2.8 sen per share (vs 2.0 sen in 2019), translating to full-year dividend of 4.5 sen per share (2019: 3.7 sen).

4Q20 manufacturing revenue of RM30.8m was lowest since 1Q17

The recovery in Apex's Malaysia businesses continued to be slow due to subdued demand from the private, government and export sectors. Notably, the group's 4Q20 manufacturing & marketing revenue of RM30.8m (-7.8% qoq / -31.6% yoy) was its lowest since 1Q17. Looking ahead, we expect the launch of new generic pharmaceutical products and higher contract manufacturing activities to drive a recovery in manufacturing revenue, but likely to fall short of our prior expectations.

Cutting 2021-22E earnings forecasts by 3-14%, downgrade to SELL

We cut our 2021E and 2022E earnings forecasts by 3% and 14% respectively after incorporating a weaker revenue growth trajectory. While we expect Apex to generate additional revenue from the distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine, the contribution may be minor at 2-4% of Apex's revenue. Separately, we have lowered our valuation multiple to 22x 2021E PER based on 1 standard deviation above its 6-year average PER of 15x (from 29x) as we expect investors to shift their focus to economic recovery plays and undervalued companies. All in all, we downgrade APEX to SELL with a lower price target of RM2.80 (from RM3.80). Key risks to our call are: (i) higher-than-expected earnings; and (ii) the securing of major new contract manufacturing jobs.

Earnings & Valuation Summary

FYE 31 Dec	2019	2020	2021E	2022E	2023E
Revenue (RMm)	688.8	698.7	772.3	829.2	867.9
EBITDA (RMm)	74.1	76.6	82.9	90.0	95.5
Pretax profit (RMm)	66.3	70.2	79.0	86.2	92.4
Net profit (RMm)	52.8	56.0	60.1	65.5	70.2
EPS (sen)	11.2	11.8	12.7	13.8	14.8
PER (x)	29.5	27.9	26.0	23.8	22.2
Core net profit (RMm)	52.3	55.3	60.1	65.5	70.2
Core EPS (sen)	11.1	11.7	12.7	13.8	14.8
Core EPS growth (%)	-13.1	5.7	8.6	9.1	7.2
Core PER (x)	29.7	28.2	26.0	23.8	22.2
Net DPS (sen)	3.7	4.5	4.2	4.6	4.9
Dividend Yield (%)	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.5
EV/EBITDA	19.7	18.4	17.1	15.5	14.3
Chg in EPS (%)			-3.1	-14.4	new
Affin/Consensus (x)			1.0	0.9	-

Source: Company, Affin Hwang estimates





Fig 1: Results Comparison

FYE Dec (RMm)	4Q19	3Q20	4Q20	QoQ	YoY	2019	2020	YoY	Comments
				% chg	% chg			% chg	
Revenue	170.6	169.1	161.6	-4.5	-5.3	688.8	698.7	1.4	Lower 4Q20 revenue due to subdued demand from the private, government and export sectors. Notably, 4Q20 manufacturing revenue of RM30.8m was the weakest since 1Q17
Op costs	-148.9	-149.9	-143.3	-4.4	-3.8	-614.7	-622.1	1.2	
EBITDA	21.7	19.2	18.3	-4.6	-15.7	74.1	76.6	3.4	
EBITDA margin (%)	12.7	11.3	11.3	0 ppt	-1.4 ppt	10.8	11.0	+0.2 ppt	2020 EBITDA margin improved by 0.2 ppt due to stringent cost control
Depn and amort	-4.6	-4.0	-4.0	-1.2	-13.9	-16.0	-16.5	2.7	
EBIT	17.1	15.2	14.3	-5.5	-16.3	58.0	60.1	3.6	
Int expense	-0.6	-0.3	-0.3	17.0	-46.2	-1.6	-1.1	-27.8	
Int and other inc	0.5	0.5	0.4	-13.7	-26.3	2.1	1.8	-16.8	
Associates	1.3	2.0	3.9	94.1	204.9	7.3	8.7	18.6	Strong 4Q20 contribution from Straits Apex as customers orders improved significantly after the weak demand seen in the first nine months of 2020
Exceptional items	0.1	0.1	0.1	-26.9	-28.3	0.4	0.7	68.6	
Pretax Profit	18.5	17.5	18.4	5.2	-0.4	66.3	70.2	5.8	
Tax	-4.5	-3.1	-4.0	28.2	-10.0	-13.6	-14.2	4.4	
Tax rate (%)	24.2	18.0	21.9	3.9 ppt	-2.3 ppt	20.4	20.2	-0.3 ppt	
MI	0.0	-0.1	0.0	nm	nm	0.0	0.0	nm	
Net profit	14.0	14.2	14.4	1.2	2.8	52.8	56.0	6.2	
EPS (sen)	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.2	2.4	11.2	11.8	5.8	
Core net profit	13.9	14.1	14.3	1.4	3.0	52.3	55.3	5.7	Within market and our expectations.

Source: Affin Hwang, Company







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