Filing Season Finds: Thursday, March 2

Forget all the "earnings season" analysis you read last month. The real earnings season—annual 10-K filing season—is happening right now.

Every year in this six-week stretch from mid-February through the end of March, we parse and analyze roughly 2,000 10-Ks to update our models for companies with a 12/31 fiscal year end. Our analysts work tirelessly to uncover red flags hidden in the footnotes and make our models the best in the business.

There's no way we could analyze so many filings in such a short time without our engineering team's help. Using machine learning and natural language processing, we automate much of the rote work of data gathering and modeling. Our technology frees our analysts up to spend more time on the complicated and unusual data points that other firms miss.

Investors understand that analyzing all financial statements and footnotes is an essential part of the diligence needed to fulfill the fiduciary duty of care. How else can one make the necessary adjustments to assess a company's true earnings and return on invested capital (ROIC)? Our innovation is to scale this diligence and make it easily accessible to our subscribers.

What We Accomplished Yesterday

Figure 1 shows the work our analysts did yesterday and over the entirety of this filing season so far.

Figure 1: Filing Season Diligence

	Filings Parsed	Data Points Collected	# of Adjustments	Total Value of Adjustments ($Billions)
Yesterday	134	20,247	3,401	$1,265
Filing Season Total	768	113,761	19,352	$8,492

Sources: New Constructs, LLC and company filings.

Yesterday, our analysts parsed 134 filings and collected 20,247 data points. In total, they made 3,401 adjustments with a dollar value of $1.3 trillion. That breaks down into:

- 1,448 income statement adjustments with a total value of $89 billion
- 1,382 balance sheet adjustments with a total value of $508 billion
- 571 valuation adjustments with a total value of $668 billion

In particular, analyst Hunter Gray found an unusual item yesterday in Nabors Industries (NBR: $15/share) 10-K.

On page 30, NBR recorded a $139 million write-down to account for its share of impairments taken by CJES, a well construction service that NBR invested in and accounted for under the equity method. This write-down was a non-cash, non-recurring charge that accounted for over 10% of NBR's reported net loss in 2016.

NBR still generated an operating loss last year, as did a large number of companies in the oil and gas industry. However, removing the impact of this hidden write-down reveals that the company is significantly closer to profitability than its GAAP net income would suggest. It also ensures that NBR's management will still be held accountable for the capital they invested in CJES in the years to come.

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Disclosure: David Trainer, Hunter Gray, and Sam McBride receive no compensation to write about any specific stock, sector, style, or theme.

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We find it. You benefit. Cutting-edge technology enables us to scale our forensic accounting expertise across 3000+ stocks. We shine a light in the dark corners of SEC filings so our clients can make safer, more informed decisions.

Our stock rating methodology instantly informs you of the quality of the business and the fairness of the stock's valuation. We do the diligence on earnings quality and valuation so you don't have to.

In-depth risk/reward analysis underpins our ratings. Our rating methodology grades every stock, ETF, and mutual fund according to what we believe are the 5 most important criteria for assessing the quality of an equity. Each grade reflects the balance of potential risk and reward of buying that equity. Our analysis results in the 5 ratings described below. Very Attractive and Attractive correspond to a "Buy" rating, Very Dangerous and Dangerous correspond to a "Sell" rating, while Neutral corresponds to a "Hold" rating.

QUESTION: Why shouldn't fund research be as good as stock research? Why should fund investors rely on backward-looking price trends?
ANSWER: They should not.

Don't judge a fund by its cover. Take a look inside at its holdings and understand the quality of earnings and valuation of the stocks it holds. We enable you to choose the best fund based on its stock-picking merits so you do not have to rely solely on backward-looking technical metrics.

The drivers of our forward-looking fund ratings are Portfolio Management (i.e. the aggregated ratings of its holdings) and Total Annual Costs. The Total Annual Costs Rating (details here) captures the all-in cost of being in a fund over a 3-year holding period, the average period for all fund investors.

Our Philosophy About Research

Accounting data is not designed for equity investors, but for debt investors. Accounting data must be translated into economic earnings to understand the profitability and valuation relevant to equity investors. Respected investors (e.g. Adam Smith, Warren Buffett and Ben Graham) have repeatedly emphasized that accounting results should not be used to value stocks. Economic earnings are what matter because they are:

1. Based on the complete set of financial information available.
2. Standard for all companies.
3. A more accurate representation of the true underlying cash flows of the business.

Additional Information

Incorporated in July 2002, New Constructs is an independent publisher of investment research that provides clients with consulting and research services. We specialize in quality-of-earnings, forensic accounting and discounted cash flow valuation analyses for all U.S. public companies. We translate accounting data from 10Ks into economic financial statements, i.e. NOPAT, Invested Capital, and WACC, to create economic earnings models, which are necessary to understand the true profitability and valuation of companies. Visit the Free Archive to download samples of our research. New Constructs is a BBB accredited business and a member of the Investorside Research Association.

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