



## Affirm's Results Affirm Our Thesis: Sell This Stock

Affirm (AFRM: \$58/share) was trading at about the same level as it is now when we warned investors against owning the stock on [January 31, 2022](#).

Since then, the company's latest earnings report disappointment confirms our thesis that the stock is overvalued by 80%+.

We are not surprised to see the company guide expectations lower for revenue and profits because the business is losing market share, lacks competitive advantages, is unprofitable, and faces intense competition.

The recent struggles at [Peloton](#) (PTON), historically one of Affirm's largest merchant partners, only bring more pressure to an already struggling business.

We first alerted investors to the risk in Affirm Holdings when we put the stock in the Danger Zone in [October 2021](#). Since then, the stock has outperformed the S&P 500 as a short by 50%.

We think the stock has much farther to fall as we detail below by using our reverse DCF analysis to quantify how the high the future cash flow expectations baked into the stock's valuation are.

### Current Valuation Implies Affirm Will Be Biggest BNPL Firm in the World

Despite facing larger, more profitable competition, Affirm is priced as if it will be the largest buy now pay later (BNPL) provider, measured by gross merchandise volume (GMV), in the world, on top of immediately achieving profitability.

To justify its current price of ~\$60/share, Affirm must:

- immediately improve its NOPAT margin to 8% (above Block's [formerly Square Inc.] 1% and Affirm's -41% TTM NOPAT margin), and
- grow revenue by 38% compounded annually (nearly 2x [expected](#) industry CAGR through 2028) for the next eight years.

In this [scenario](#), Affirm's revenue grows to \$11.4 billion in fiscal 2029, or 13 times higher than the company's fiscal 2021 revenue.

If we assume Affirm maintains a revenue per GMV rate of just over 10% (equal to fiscal 2021), then this scenario implies Affirm's GMV in fiscal 2029 is \$109 billion, which is 1.6x Klarna's TTM GMV at the midway point of 2021. For context, Statista [estimates](#) Walmart's 2020 ecommerce GMV was \$92 billion. Affirm must process more than double Walmart's 2020 ecommerce GMV simply to justify its current valuation. We are skeptical of any BNPL firm ever achieving such high merchandise volume.

### 56% Downside If Consensus Growth is Realized

We review additional DCF scenarios below to highlight the downside risk should Affirm's revenue grow at consensus rates, or if margins do not improve as much as the scenario outlined above.

If we assume Affirm:

- immediately improves its NOPAT margin to 8%,
- grows revenue by 46% in fiscal 2022 and 43% in fiscal 2023 (equal to consensus), and
- grows revenue by 22% each year thereafter through fiscal 2029 (equal to projected industry growth), then,

Affirm is worth just [\\$26/share](#) today – a 56% downside to the current price

### 83% Downside If Margins Remain Capped by Competition

If we assume Affirm:

- immediately improves its NOPAT margin to 4%, which equals Block's highest ever margin,
- grows revenue by 46% in fiscal 2022 and 43% in fiscal 2023, and

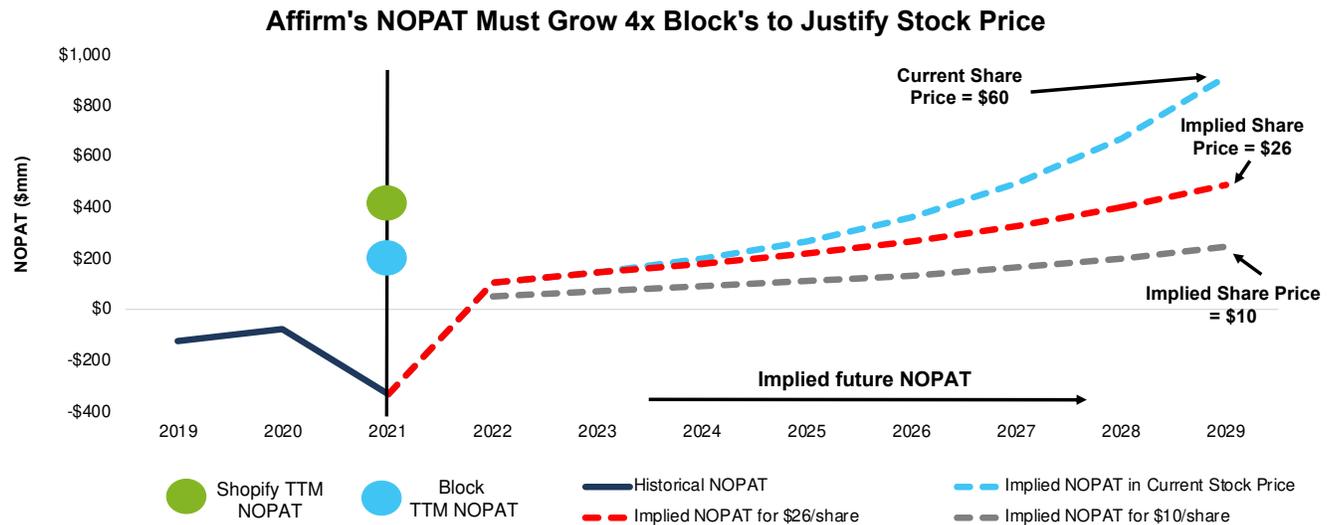


- grows revenue by 22% each year through fiscal 2029 then,

Affirm is worth just [\\$10/share](#) today – an 83% downside to the current price.

Figure 1 compares Affirm’s implied future NOPAT in these three scenarios to its historical NOPAT. For reference, we include Block (SQ) and Shopify’s NOPAT.

**Figure 1: Affirm’s Historical vs. Implied NOPAT: DCF Scenarios**



Sources: New Constructs, LLC and company filings.

Each of the above scenarios assumes Affirm grows revenue, NOPAT, and FCF without increasing working capital or fixed assets. This assumption is highly unlikely but allows us to create best-case scenarios that demonstrate the expectations embedded in the current valuation. For reference, Affirm’s invested capital has grown 4x from fiscal 2019 to fiscal 2021. If we assume Affirm’s invested capital increases at a similar rate in DCF scenarios two and three above, the downside risk is even larger.

**Fundamental Research Provides Clarity in Frothy Markets**

2022 has quickly shown investors that fundamentals matter and stocks don’t only go up. With a better grasp on fundamentals, investors have a better sense of when to buy and sell – and – know how much risk they take when they own a stock at certain levels. Without reliable fundamental research, investors have no way of gauging whether a stock is expensive or cheap.

As shown above, [disciplined, reliable fundamental research](#) shows that even after plummeting, Affirm still holds significant downside.

*This article originally published on [February 11, 2022](#).*

*Disclosure: David Trainer, Kyle Guske II, and Matt Shuler receive no compensation to write about any specific stock, style, or theme.*

*Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [StockTwits](#) for real-time alerts on all our research.*



## ***It's Official: We Offer the Best Fundamental Data in the World***

Many firms claim their research is superior, but none of them can prove it with independent studies from highly-respected institutions as we can. Three different papers from both the public and private sectors show:

1. Legacy fundamental datasets suffer from significant inaccuracies, omissions and biases.
2. Only our “novel database” enables investors to overcome these flaws and apply [reliable](#) fundamental data in their research.
3. Our proprietary measures of [Core Earnings](#) and [Earnings Distortion](#) materially improve stock picking and forecasting of profits.

### **Best Fundamental Data in the World**

Forthcoming in [The Journal of Financial Economics](#), a top peer-reviewed journal, [Core Earnings: New Data & Evidence](#) proves our Robo-Analyst technology overcomes material shortcomings in legacy firms' data collection processes to provide superior [fundamental data](#), [earnings](#) models, and [research](#). More [details](#).

Key quotes from the paper:

- “[New Constructs’] *Total Adjustments* differs significantly from the items identified and excluded from Compustat’s adjusted earnings measures. For example... 50% to 70% of the variation in *Total Adjustments* is not explained by *S&P Global’s (SPGI) Adjustments* individually.” – pp. 14, 1<sup>st</sup> para.
- “A final source of differences [between New Constructs’ and S&P Global’s data] is due to data collection oversights...we identified cases where Compustat did not collect information relating to firms’ income that is useful in assessing core earnings.” – pp. 16, 2<sup>nd</sup> para.

### **Superior Models**

A top accounting firm features the superiority of our ROIC, NOPAT and Invested Capital research to Capital IQ & Bloomberg’s in [Getting ROIC Right](#). See the [Appendix](#) for direct comparison details.

Key quotes from the paper:

- “...an accurate calculation of ROIC requires more diligence than often occurs in some of the common, off-the-shelf ROIC calculations. Only by scouring the footnotes and the MD&A [ as New Constructs does] can investors get an accurate calculation of ROIC.” – pp. 8, 5<sup>th</sup> para.
- “The majority of the difference...comes from New Constructs’ machine learning approach, which leverages technology to calculate ROIC by applying accounting adjustments that may be buried deeply in the footnotes across thousands of companies.” – pp. 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> para.

### **Superior Stock Ratings**

Robo-Analysts’ stock ratings outperform those from human analysts as shown in this [paper](#) from Indiana’s Kelley School of Business. Bloomberg features the paper [here](#).

Key quotes from the paper:

- “the portfolios formed following the buy recommendations of Robo-Analysts earn abnormal returns that are statistically and economically significant.” – pp. 6, 3<sup>rd</sup> para.
- “Our results ultimately suggest that Robo-Analysts are a valuable, alternative information intermediary to traditional sell-side analysts.” – pp. 20, 3<sup>rd</sup> para.

Our mission is to provide the best fundamental analysis of public and private businesses in the world and make it affordable for all investors, not just Wall Street insiders.

We believe every investor deserves to know the whole truth about the profitability and valuation of any company they consider for investment. More details on our cutting-edge technology and how we use it are [here](#).



## ***DISCLOSURES***

New Constructs®, LLC (together with any subsidiaries and/or affiliates, "New Constructs") is an independent organization with no management ties to the companies it covers. None of the members of New Constructs' management team or the management team of any New Constructs' affiliate holds a seat on the Board of Directors of any of the companies New Constructs covers. New Constructs does not perform any investment or merchant banking functions and does not operate a trading desk.

New Constructs' Stock Ownership Policy prevents any of its employees or managers from engaging in Insider Trading and restricts any trading whereby an employee may exploit inside information regarding our stock research. In addition, employees and managers of the company are bound by a code of ethics that restricts them from purchasing or selling a security that they know or should have known was under consideration for inclusion in a New Constructs report nor may they purchase or sell a security for the first two days after New Constructs issues a report on that security.

## ***DISCLAIMERS***

The information and opinions presented in this report are provided to you for information purposes only and are not to be used or considered as an offer or solicitation of an offer to buy or sell securities or other financial instruments. New Constructs has not taken any steps to ensure that the securities referred to in this report are suitable for any particular investor and nothing in this report constitutes investment, legal, accounting or tax advice. This report includes general information that does not take into account your individual circumstance, financial situation or needs, nor does it represent a personal recommendation to you. The investments or services contained or referred to in this report may not be suitable for you and it is recommended that you consult an independent investment advisor if you are in doubt about any such investments or investment services.

Information and opinions presented in this report have been obtained or derived from sources believed by New Constructs to be reliable, but New Constructs makes no representation as to their accuracy, authority, usefulness, reliability, timeliness or completeness. New Constructs accepts no liability for loss arising from the use of the information presented in this report, and New Constructs makes no warranty as to results that may be obtained from the information presented in this report. Past performance should not be taken as an indication or guarantee of future performance, and no representation or warranty, express or implied, is made regarding future performance. Information and opinions contained in this report reflect a judgment at its original date of publication by New Constructs and are subject to change without notice. New Constructs may have issued, and may in the future issue, other reports that are inconsistent with, and reach different conclusions from, the information presented in this report. Those reports reflect the different assumptions, views and analytical methods of the analysts who prepared them and New Constructs is under no obligation to insure that such other reports are brought to the attention of any recipient of this report.

New Constructs' reports are intended for distribution to its professional and institutional investor customers. Recipients who are not professionals or institutional investor customers of New Constructs should seek the advice of their independent financial advisor prior to making any investment decision or for any necessary explanation of its contents.

This report is not directed to, or intended for distribution to or use by, any person or entity who is a citizen or resident of or located in any locality, state, country or jurisdiction where such distribution, publication, availability or use would be contrary to law or regulation or which would be subject New Constructs to any registration or licensing requirement within such jurisdiction.

This report may provide the addresses of websites. Except to the extent to which the report refers to New Constructs own website material, New Constructs has not reviewed the linked site and takes no responsibility for the content therein. Such address or hyperlink (including addresses or hyperlinks to New Constructs own website material) is provided solely for your convenience and the information and content of the linked site do not in any way form part of this report. Accessing such websites or following such hyperlink through this report shall be at your own risk.

All material in this report is the property of, and under copyright, of New Constructs. None of the contents, nor any copy of it, may be altered in any way, copied, or distributed or transmitted to any other party without the prior express written consent of New Constructs. All trademarks, service marks and logos used in this report are trademarks or service marks or registered trademarks or service marks of New Constructs. Copyright New Constructs, LLC 2003 through the present date. All rights reserved.