

Warner Bros. Discovery

Turning the page to '24

Maintain Rating: BUY | PO: 17.00 USD | Price: 9.56 USD

4Q Review: Delivering strong FCF despite tough macro

Warner Bros. Discovery's (WBD) 4Q performance reflects the challenging environment while also underscoring the heavy lifting management has undertaken over the last 12-18 months. Reflecting the impact of the various strikes (lower content spend) along with working capital improvements, 4Q FCF was \$3.31bn (vs. \$2.55bn est.). This enabled WBD to exit 4Q with a 3.9x net leverage ratio. The advertising market remains choppy, and Network advertising was -12% (-14% ex-FX vs. our -11% forecast) reflecting audience declines in domestic general entertainment and news networks and soft linear advertising markets mainly in the U.S and to a lesser extent certain international markets. The Studio segment was also challenged, largely due to the various strikes with revenue declining 18% (ex. FX) and Adjusted EBITDA declines of 30% (ex. FX). All-in, total WBD rev. of \$10.3bn (-7% Y/Y CC) beat our \$10.1bn est. and adj. EBITDA of \$2.47bn (-5% Y/Y CC) was below our \$2.77bn est.

Mixed performance by segment

By segment key drivers included: (1) **better Networks revenue** of -9% (vs. -10% est.)—reflecting -12% advertising declines (vs. -11% est.) primarily driven by audience declines in domestic general entertainment and news networks and soft advertising markets in the US, -4% affiliate revenue declines (vs. -6% est.) driven by declines in pay-tv subscribers and the exiting of AT&T SportsNet business partially offset by contractual affiliate increases, (2) **essentially inline Direct-to-Consumer revenue (DTC)** of +3% (vs. +3% est.), driven by total DTC subscribers of 97.7mn (1.8mn net adds vs our est. of -0.3mn) and distribution revenue increases of 4% driven by new partnership launches, price increases in the U.S. and certain international markets, and favorable mix shifts from wholesale to retail and the transfer of TNT Sports Chile to DTC from Networks, and (3) **lower Studios revenue** of -17% (vs. -9% est.), as TV revenue declined significantly due to certain large licensing deals in the prior year and the impact of the various strikes.

Turning the page to '24

WBD did not provide an updated 2024 outlook in their earnings release. However, with the strikes now over and early signs of the advertising market stabilizing, we believe the company remains positioned for a recovery in 2024. The company should be aided by a restarting TV production, a solid film slate, an improving ad market and the launch of DTC in several international markets. We look for any update regarding these various key drivers on the upcoming earnings call.

Maintain Buy and \$17 PO

We reiterate our Buy rating and \$17 PO. We continue to believe WBD has a compelling assortment of assets and view the current valuation of \sim 5x CY24E EV/EBITDA as undemanding. Upcoming catalysts include: 1) a potential advertising recovery; and 2) Max rollout in Latam in late 1Q and most of Europe in 2Q/3Q prior to the Summer Olympics in Paris.

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Refer to important disclosures on page 4 to 6. Analyst Certification on page 3. Price
Objective Basis/Risk on page 3.

23 February 2024

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Stock Data

Price

 Price Objective
 17.00 USD

 Date Established
 9-Nov-2023

 Investment Opinion
 C-1-9

 52-Week Range
 9.27 USD - 16.34 USD

 Mrkt Val (mn) / Shares Out (mn)
 23,145 USD / 2,421.0

 Free Float
 90.7%

 Average Daily Value (mn)
 200.15 USD

9.56 USD

 Average Daily Value (mn)
 200.15 USD

 BofA Ticker / Exchange
 WBD / NAS

 Bloomberg / Reuters
 WBD US / WBD.OQ

 ROE (2023E)
 7.7%

 Net Dbt to Eqty (Dec-2022A)
 93.0%

 ESGMeter™
 High

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Exhibit 1: WBD – Variance TableWBD's 4Q revenue of \$10.3bn beat our estimate

Current Quarter

		Act.	<u>New</u>	_	<u>Old</u>	_	_
Fiscal Year Ends 12/31		Q4/22A	Q4/23A	Y/Y	Q4/23E	Y/Y	D
WBD : Actuals & BofA Estimates							
Candina							
Studios Advantaina		(¢2)	Ċ A	2220/	Ċ10	4220/	(¢C)
Advertising		(\$3)	\$4 (\$2)	-233%	\$10	-433%	(\$6)
Distribution		\$4	(\$2)	-150%	\$4	0%	(\$6)
Content		\$3,631	\$2,933	-19%	\$3,317	-9%	(\$384)
Other Table Andrea Bassacce	-	\$210	\$238	13%	\$169	<u>-19%</u>	\$69 (\$337)
Total Studios Revenue		\$3,842	\$3,173	-17%	\$3,500	-9%	(\$327)
% Chg. (YOY)		NM	-17%		-9%		
Networks							
Advertising		\$2,226	\$1,948	-12%	\$1,981	-11%	(\$33)
Distribution		\$2,874	\$2,752	-4%	\$2,713	-6%	\$39
Content		\$307	\$261	-15%	\$200	-35%	\$61
Other		\$112	<u>\$76</u>	-32%	<u>\$50</u>	<u>-56%</u>	\$27
Total Networks Revenue	-	\$5,519	\$5,037	-9%	\$4,944	-10%	\$93
% Chg. (YOY)		NM	-9%		-10%		,,,,
DTC		Ć122	¢100	F10/	ć17F	420/	Ć11
Advertising		\$123	\$186	51%	\$175	42%	\$11
Distribution		\$2,084	\$2,167	4%	\$2,159	4%	\$8
Content		\$243	\$171	-30%	\$191	-21%	(\$20)
<u>Other</u>	-	<u>\$1</u>	<u>\$5</u>	400%	<u>\$2</u>	100%	<u>\$3</u>
Total DTC Revenue		\$2,451	\$2,529	3%	\$2,526	3%	\$3
% Chg. (YOY)		NM	3%		3%		
Corporate		\$28	\$0	NM	\$0	NM	\$0
Inter-segment Eliminations	_	<u>(\$832)</u>	<u>(\$458)</u>	<u>-45%</u>	<u>(\$836)</u>	1%	<u>\$378</u>
Total Revenue		\$11,008	\$10,281	-7%	\$10,134	-8%	\$147
% Chg. (YOY)		NM	-7%		-8%		
Adj. EBITDA:							
Studios		\$768	\$543	-29%	\$710	-8%	(\$167)
Networks		\$2,478	\$2,208	-11%	\$2,213	-11%	(\$5)
DTC		(\$217)	(\$55)	-75%	\$48	-122%	(\$103)
Corporate		(\$451)	(\$314)	-30%	(\$200)	-56%	(\$114)
Inter-segment Eliminations		\$25	\$89	NM	\$ <u>\$0</u>	<u>NM</u>	\$89
Total adj. EBITDA	=	\$2,603	\$2,471	-5%	\$2,771	6%	(\$300)
Operating (loss) income		(\$968)	(\$182)	NM	\$757	NM	(\$939)
			•		•		
Net (loss) available to Warner Bros. Discovery, Inc.		(\$1,408)	(\$400)	-72%	(\$222)	-84%	(\$178)
<u>Adjustments</u>	=	NM	<u>\$1,624</u>	NM	<u>\$1,624</u>	<u>NM</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Adj. Net (loss) available to Warner Bros. Discovery, Inc.		NM	\$1,224	NM	\$1,402	NM	(\$178)
Adj. Diluted EPS		\$0.20	\$0.50	150%	\$0.58	NM	-\$0.07
Weighted average diluted shares outstanding		2,428	2,439	0%	2,438	NM	1
Reported Free Cash Flow		\$2,482	¢2 210	33%	\$2,549	3%	¢761
neported Free Cash Flow		⊋ ∠,48∠	\$3,310	33%	\$ 2,549	3%	\$761

Source: BofA Global Research estimates

BofA GLOBAL RESEARCH



Price objective basis & risk

Warner Bros. Discovery (WBD)

Our price objective of \$17 is based on 7x our consolidated CY24E pro forma EV/EBITDA multiple, in line with peers historical multiples due to a similar growth profile.

Downside risks to our price objective are greater than expected merger integration issues, including management turnover, an inability to scale DTC assets with a deceleration in subscriber growth and increase in churn due to a rise in streaming competition from well-capitalized media and tech companies, advertising market declines, a downturn in ratings at its key networks, and an acceleration in Pay TV subscriber declines.

Analyst Certification

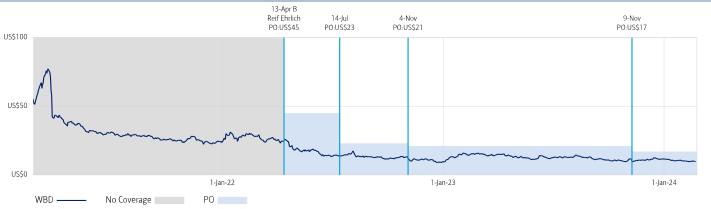
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Warner Bros. (WBD) Price Chart



B: Buy, N: Neutral, U: Underperform, PO: Price Objective, NA: No longer valid, NR: No Rating

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Equity Investment Rating Distribution: Media & Entertainment Group (as of 31 Dec 2023)

Coverage Universe	Count	Percent	Inv. Banking Relationships R1	Count	Percent
Buy	35	53.85%	Buy	15	42.86%
Hold	15	23.08%	Hold	8	53.33%
Sell	15	23.08%	Sell	7	46.67%

Equity Investment Rating Distribution: Global Group (as of 31 Dec 2023)

Coverage Universe	Count	Percent	Inv. Banking Relationships R1	Count	Percent
Buy	1895	53.62%	Buy	1083	57.15%
Hold	832	23.54%	Hold	454	54.57%
Sell	807	22.84%	Sell	383	47.46%

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Investment rating Total return expectation (within 12-month period of date of initial rating) Ratings dispersion guidelines for coverage cluster^{R2}

Buy	≥ 10%	≤ 70%
Neutral	≥ 0%	≤ 30%
Jnderperform	N/A	≥ 20%

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