

Tesla Inc. (TSLA): 3Q24 First Take - stronger margins

- **Our initial view from the shareholder letter is that the report will be viewed by investors as a positive, particularly as the automotive non-GAAP gross margin excluding regulatory credits improved to 17.1% from 14.6% in 2Q, and the Energy gross margin expanded to over 30%. Tesla still expects to grow vehicle volumes this year. We expect the sustainability of better margins, the ability for the auto business to grow (not only in 2024 but in 2025 and beyond), and progress on AI related efforts (e.g. FSD and Optimus) will be key focus items on the call.**
- Tesla reported revenue/non-GAAP diluted EPS (excluding SBC) of \$25.2 bn/\$0.72, which was 1% below/\$0.13 above the Street (FactSet) and about in line with/\$0.15 above GS.
- The automotive non-GAAP gross margin (including SBC and excluding the revenue from regulatory credits) was 17.1%, above GS at 14.6%. This was up from 14.6% in 2Q24 and from 16.3% in 3Q23.
- The total company gross margin (including SBC) was 19.8%, above both GS at 16.1% and the Street at 17.1% with upside vs. our forecast driven by higher Auto and Energy segment gross margin as well as higher regulatory credit sales.
- EBIT of ~\$2.7 bn was above our forecast of ~\$1.8 bn.
- FCF was \$2.7 bn in 3Q24.
- The company highlighted that despite ongoing macroeconomic conditions, it expects to achieve slight growth in vehicle deliveries in 2024 and Energy storage deployments are expected to more than double yoy in 2024.
- Tesla commented that it believes its plans for new vehicles, including lower cost vehicles, remain on track and Tesla expects to begin production in 1H25.

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Results

Tesla reported 2Q24 revenue of \$25,182 mn (down 1% qoq and up 8% yoy) which was about in line with GS at \$25,279 mn and 1% below the Street (FactSet) at \$25,468 mn. Tesla reported the following by segment:

- **Automotive** revenue of \$20,016 mn (up 1% qoq and up 2% yoy) compared to GS at \$20,240 mn and the Street at \$20,444 mn. Implied vehicle ASP was about

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\$42.0K and below our \$43.0K estimate. Sales of regulatory credits were \$739 mn in the quarter vs. our estimate of \$450 mn, down from \$890 mn last quarter and up from \$554 mn in 3Q23.

- **Energy Generation and Storage** revenue of \$2,376 mn (down 21% qoq and up 52% yoy) compared to GS at \$2,257 mn. Tesla commented that energy storage deployments were 6.9 GWh and the segment achieved record gross margin in the quarter (of >30%), despite lower Megapack volumes (though Powerwall achieved record deployments). Energy is currently Tesla's highest margin business.
- **Service and Other** revenue of \$2,790 mn (up 7% qoq and up 29% yoy) compared to GS at \$2,783 mn. Tesla noted that Service and Other achieved a record gross profit in 3Q, driven mostly by higher gross profit from supercharging, service center margin improvement, and higher gross profit generation from Parts Sales and Merchandise.

As previously reported, total vehicle deliveries in the quarter were about 463k (up 4% qoq and up 6% yoy). Model 3/Y deliveries in the quarter were about 440k (up 4% qoq and up 5% yoy), and other model deliveries (e.g., S/X/Cybertruck) were about 23k (up 6% qoq and up 43% yoy). Tesla produced about 470k vehicles (up 9% yoy).

The total company gross margin (including SBC) was 19.8%, above both GS at 16.1% and the Street at 17.1%. The 2Q24 margin was 18.0%, and 3Q23 was 17.9%.

The non-GAAP automotive gross margin (including SBC and excluding the revenue from regulatory credits) was 17.1%, which compares to GS at 14.6%. The 2Q24 margin was 14.6%, and 3Q23 was 16.3%.

EBIT of ~\$2.7 bn was above our forecast of ~\$1.8 bn.

Non-GAAP diluted EPS (excluding SBC) was \$0.72, above both GS at \$0.57 and the Street at \$0.59. Relative to our estimate, EPS upside was driven by ~370 bp higher gross margin, which was partially offset by lower interest and other income and higher taxes.

EPS was \$0.62 on a GAAP basis (including SBC).

Cash and cash equivalents and investments increased by \$2.9 bn qoq to \$33.6 bn, with FCF of \$2.7 bn in 3Q. Inventory dollars were up \$0.3 bn qoq to \$14.5 bn.

By region, Tesla commented that:

- **US:** Tesla commented that the refreshed Model 3 ramp continued successfully with higher total production and lower COGS qoq. Cybertruck production increased sequentially and achieved a positive gross margin for the first time. Preparation of the Semi factory continues and remains on track with builds scheduled to start by the end of 2025.
- **China:** Tesla commented that the Shanghai factory recently produced its 3-millionth vehicle in October and exported its 1-millionth vehicle in September. COGS per vehicle improved sequentially to a new low. Shanghai remains on track to begin shipping Megapacks in 1Q25.

- **Europe:** Tesla noted that COGS per vehicle improved sequentially. Additionally, Tesla noted Model Y remains a compelling offering in several European countries.

Separately, the company noted that Cybercab will be built on the next-gen platform that the company estimates will have an efficiency of 5.5 mi/kwh. On batteries, Tesla stated that it produced its 100-millionth 4680 cell and continues to progress on its dry-cathode manufacturing lines.

Outlook

The company reiterated that it is currently between two major growth waves: the first one began with the global expansion of the Model 3/Y platform, and Tesla believes the next one will be initiated by advances in autonomy and the introduction of new products, including those built on the next generation vehicle platform.

The company importantly highlighted that despite ongoing macroeconomic conditions, it expects to achieve slight growth in vehicle deliveries in 2024 and Energy storage deployments are expected to more than double yoy in 2024.

Tesla noted that plans for new vehicles, including more affordable models, remain on track for start of production in 1H25. Recall that these vehicles will utilize aspects of the next-gen platform while being produced on the same manufacturing lines as the current vehicle line-up. The Robotaxi product will continue to pursue the “unboxed” manufacturing strategy.

Price target and key risks

We are Neutral rated on the stock, and our 12-month price target is \$230 (based on 65X Q5-Q8E EPS including SBC).

Key downside risks to our view relate to potentially larger vehicle price reductions than we expect, increased competition in EVs, slower EV demand, delays with products/capabilities like FSD/4680, key person risk, the internal control environment, margins, and operational risks associated with Tesla’s high degree of vertical integration. Upside risks include faster EV adoption and/or share gain by Tesla, a stronger macroeconomic environment for new vehicle sales more generally, earlier new product launches than we expect, and an earlier/larger impact from AI enabled products (e.g., FSD, Optimus and robotaxis) than we currently anticipate.

TSLA	12m Price Target: \$230.00	Price: \$213.65	Upside: 7.7%			
Neutral	GS Forecast					
		12/23	12/24E	12/25E	12/26E	
	Market cap: \$743.7bn	Revenue (\$ mn)	96,773.0	99,797.9	118,504.8	140,042.1
	Enterprise value: \$732.1bn	EBITDA (\$ mn)	16,633.0	15,087.0	21,977.6	29,536.6
	3m ADTV: \$17.4bn	EBIT (\$ mn)	8,891.0	6,749.1	11,438.6	16,811.2
	United States	EPS (\$)	2.60	1.80	2.95	4.20
	Americas Autos & Industrial Tech	P/E (X)	83.5	118.4	72.3	50.9
	M&A Rank: 3	EV/EBITDA (X)	40.6	44.5	30.3	22.4
		FCF yield (%)	0.6	0.1	1.2	1.6
		Dividend yield (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Net debt/EBITDA (X)	(0.9)	(0.8)	(0.9)	(1.0)
			6/24	9/24E	12/24E	3/25E
	EPS (\$)	0.42	0.47	0.57	0.54	

Source: Company data, Goldman Sachs Research estimates, FactSet. Price as of 23 Oct 2024 close.

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