Company Name: Texas Instruments
Company Ticker: TXN US
Date: 2018-07-24
Event Description: Q2 2018 Earnings Call

Market Cap: 111,400.89
Current PX: 113.80
YTD Change($): +9.36
YTD Change(%): +8.962

Bloomberg Estimates - EPS
Current Quarter: 1.501
Current Year: 5.593
Bloomberg Estimates - Sales
Current Quarter: 4253.083
Current Year: 16004.103

Q2 2018 Earnings Call

Company Participants

- David Pahl
- Rafael R. Lizardi

Other Participants

- John William Pitzer
- Timothy Arcuri
- Ross C. Seymore
- Amit Daryanani
- Harlan Sur
- Vivek Arya
- Stacy Aaron Rasgon
- Joseph Moore

MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION SECTION

David Pahl

Q2 Business Highlights

Revenue, Operating Margins and EPS

- So turning to this quarter's results, I'll start with a quick summary
- Revenue for Q2 increased 9% from a year ago as demand for our products remained strong in the industrial and automotive markets
- In our core businesses, Analog revenue grew 12%, and Embedded Processing revenue grew 9% compared to the same quarter a year ago
- Operating margins increased in both businesses
- EPS were $1.40 including $0.03 discrete tax benefit not in our original guidance

Cash Flow from Operations

- With that backdrop, I'll provide some details on our performance, which we believe continues to be representative of the ongoing strength of our business model
- In Q2, our cash flow from operations was $1.8B
- We believe that FCF growth, especially on a per-share basis, is most important to maximizing shareholder value in the long term
- FCF for the trailing 12-month period was $5.7B, up 42% from a year-ago

  - FCF margin for the same period was 36.6% of revenue
- We continue to benefit from the quality of our product portfolio that's long-lived and diverse, and the efficiency of our manufacturing strategy, the latter of which includes our growing 300-millimeter Analog output
- We believe that FCF will be valued only if it's productively invested in the business or returned to owners
- For the trailing 12-month period, we returned $5.6B of cash to owners through a combination of dividends and stock repurchases
- Our commitment to return all of our FCF to owners remains unchanged

Segment Performance

Analog and Embedded Processing

  - I'll now provide some details by segment
  - From a year-ago quarter, Analog revenue grew 12% due to Power and Signal Chain
  - High-volume declined
  - Embedded Processing revenue increased 9% from a year-ago quarter due to about equal growth in both Processors and Connected Microcontrollers
  - In our Other segment, revenue declined 7% from a year ago primarily due to custom ASIC

Revenue Performance by End Market

- Now, I'll provide some insight into this quarter's revenue performance by end market vs. a year ago
- Industrial and automotive demand remained strong due to broad-based growth
- We continue to be pleased with our investments which are directed across 14 sectors in industrial and 5 sectors in automotive, and continue to deliver broad-based and diverse revenue growth
- Personal electronics grew low-single digits with increases across several sectors and customers
  - These increases were offset by declines at some customers
- Communication equipment declined from a year ago and declined low- to mid-single digits sequentially
- And lastly, enterprise systems grew

Summary

In summary, we continue to focus our strategy on the industrial and automotive markets where we've been allocating our capital and driving initiatives to strengthen our position

This is based on a belief that industrial and automotive will be the fastest-growing semiconductor markets

- They have increasing semiconductor content, and these markets provide diversity and longevity
- All of this translates to a high terminal value of our portfolio

Rafael R. Lizardi

Financial Highlights

Revenue and Gross Profit Margin

- Gross profit in the quarter was $2.62B or 65.2% of revenue
- From a year ago, gross profit increased primarily due to higher revenue
- Gross profit margin increased 90BPS

Operating Expenses and Acquisition Charges

- Operating expenses in the quarter were $825mm, a 2% increase from a year ago and about as expected
- On a trailing 12-month basis, operating expenses were 20.6% of revenue, within our range of expectations
- Over the last 12 months, we have invested $1.53B in R&D
- We are pleased with our disciplined process of allocating capital to R&D that allows us to continue to grow our top line and gain market share
- Acquisition charges, a non-cash expense, were $79mm
- Acquisition charges will be about $80mm per quarter through Q3 2019, then decline to about $50mm per quarter for two remaining years

Operating Profit, Margin and Net Income

- Operating profit was $1.71B or 42.6% of revenue
- Operating profit was up 16% from the year ago quarter
- Operating margin for Analog was 47%, up from 44.7% a year ago
- And for Embedded Processing, it was 35.4%, up from 31.2% a year ago
- Our focused investment on the best sustainable growth opportunities with differentiated positions enabled both businesses to continue to contribute nicely to FCF growth
- Net income in Q2 was $1.41B or $1.40 per share

Cash Generation, CapEx, Dividends and Repurchase

- Let me now comment on our capital management results, starting with our cash generation
- Cash flow from operations was $1.83B in the quarter
- It increased $909mm from the year ago quarter primarily due to a lower tax rate, as well as higher revenue, which includes more 300-millimeter Analog revenue
- CapEx were $249mm in the quarter
- FCF was $5.73B on a trailing 12-month basis, up 42% from a year ago
- In Q2, we paid $606mm in dividends and repurchased $1.02B of our own stock for a total return of $1.62B in Q2
- We have returned $5.6B to owners in the past 12 months, consistent with our strategy to return to owners all of our FCF

- Over the same period, our dividends represented 41% of FCF, underscoring their sustainability

Balance Sheet

Cash and Short-Term Investments

- Our balance sheet remains strong with $5.13B of cash and short-term investments at the end of Q2
- In the quarter, we retired $0.5B of debt as it became due, and raised $1.5B of 30-year debt with a coupon of 4.15%
- We currently have total debt of $5.1B with a weighted average coupon of 2.77%
- Inventory days were 135 days, up 2 days from a year ago and within our expected range
- We continue to believe there is strategic value in owning and controlling our inventory

Q3 Outlook

Turning to our outlook for Q3, we expect TI revenue in the range of $4.11B to $4.45B, and EPS to be in the range of $1.41 to $1.63, which includes an estimated $10mm discrete tax benefit

We continue to expect our ongoing annual operating tax rate to be about 20% in 2018 and 16% starting in 2019

Just as a reminder, the higher tax rate this year is due to noncash charges

More detail of our expectations for taxes can be found on our website under Financial Summary Data

Closing Remarks

In closing, I'll note that the strength of our business model was demonstrated throughout our financial performance over the last few years from top line growth and margin expansion to FCF generation

We continue to invest in our competitive advantages, which are manufacturing and technology, portfolio breadth, market reach and diverse and long-lived products

- We will continue to strengthen these advantages through disciplined capital allocation and by focusing on the best products, Analog and Embedded Processing and the best market, industrial and automotive, which I believe will enable us to continue to improve and deliver FCF per share growth for a long time to come

QUESTION AND ANSWER SECTION

<Q - John William Pitzer>: David, my first question is just on the high-volume Analog segment. I think in your prepared comments, you had mentioned that it declined y-over-y in the June quarter. I'm kind of curious to what extent, was that by choice as you prune the portfolio? To what extent then do you think that that's just a handset phenomenon as the builds last year for product cycles were more robust than this year? And to what extent do you feel that might be a leading indicator for maybe some excess in the "cycle"?

<A - David Pahl>: Yeah, John, thanks for asking that question. I think what we're seeing there is a result of how we've been allocating our resources in R&D and if you remember back in February in our capital management call as we went through that, we've got a pretty disciplined process. And, essentially, what we're trying to do is steer more money to long-lived revenue opportunities where we've got some level of differentiation and we'll have that for some time. So I think when you look at the results overall, revenue grew 12% y-over-y. That's inclusive of what happened inside of High Volume and, again, I think that that's a result of allocating resources to the best sustainable opportunities.

If you drop down into there in the prepared comments, obviously industrial and automotive continued to do well.

Inside of HVAL, you'd see that industrial and automotive did well as well. It just doesn't make up as much of a percentage of that revenue. So, anyway, we're pleased with that outcome and not surprised by it. Do you have a follow on, John?

<Q - John William Pitzer>: Yeah, Dave that was helpful; and then, Rafael, as my follow-on, I know it's probably better to look at the business trends on a y-over-y basis rather than sequential and on a y-over-y, you showed really good operating margin leverage in the Embedded business. But, sequentially, it was flat on up revenue and there's still that gap between Embedded op margins and Analog op margins. How do you think about the leverage in the Embedded market from here? And will we ever close that gap between Embedded and Analog?

<A - Rafael R. Lizardi>: So let me step back and take you back to our capital management strategy and some of the things that we say there and how we think about driving value for owners of the company. And, to us, it all comes down to growing FCF per share. So it's not operating margin, it's not gross margin, it's not Analog vs. Embedded, it's all about growing FCF per share. Both of those businesses are and we expect to continue to be contributors to that FCF per share. So the focus is growing the top line. As we continue to invest in what we think are the best markets: industrial, automotive, and in the case of Analog as we continue to expand our 300-millimeter footprint, where we have a structural cost advantage.

<Q - Timothy Arcuri>: I had a question on the guidance. The June numbers were a little bit below seasonal, and I know that seasonal is hard to really figure out what's actually normal. But that was kind of coming off more difficult Q1 comps. But if I look at the September quarter guidance it's a few hundred basis points below seasonal and it's up like 300BPS y-over-y, which is the lowest in a couple years. Is there any element of more difficult comps or is there, in fact, some kind of channel inventory headwinds? Thank you.

<A - David Pahl>: Yes, Tim. I'd just say that when we put together our guidance, the two strongest signals that we see are orders that we get from customers as well as the demand fees that we get through our consignment programs. And I would just say that if there's something specific to call out as we have in the past, if there was a specific customer or a specific end market or something like that that was changing, we would let you know about that.

And as an example, lead times remain stable. Cancellations remain low. Reschedules remain low. We look at inventory in the channels. That remains steady at about four weeks, so we really don't see any changes from that standpoint.

And the other thing, as you pointed out, when you look at a couple of data points, it's hard to describe what is exactly seasonal and so if you look over the last five years, we've had a 9% sequential growth. Three of those five years has been at 6% and if you look over a 10-year period, it's 7%. So, certainly our guidance from a seasonal standpoint is certainly within the range of things that we've seen in the past.

Do you have a follow on?

<Q - Timothy Arcuri>: Thanks. And then I guess just as a quick follow-on, Dave, can you give what orders and book-to-bill were?

<A - David Pahl>: I can give that; let me just find it. Yeah. So book-to-bill orders were up 10% sequentially. Book-to-bill was 1.06. I'll point out it was 1.06 a year ago and 1.03 last quarter. I always feel the need to comment on book-to-bill with about 60% of our revenue going through consignment programs where we don't get any orders in advance of pull from that demand. So book-to-bill isn't as strong of a signal or at least as clear of a signal as what it used to be in the past.

<Q - Ross C. Seymore>: Dave, I just wanted to ask about from not necessarily a cyclical point of view but from a macro point of view, with all the discussions of trade wars, tariffs, et cetera – I know you haven't called out seeing anything, per your answer to the last question, but just how does TI, in general, think about that dynamic as potentially impacting your business and are you, in fact, seeing any impact as of yet?

<A - Rafael R. Lizardi>: Yeah, Ross. I'll go ahead and take that. First, let me state TI's long term support of free trade and strong IP protection, and those are both important to TI and the broader SC industry, so we continue to feel that way. We have stated in that position for a long time and we continue to do that and advocate that.

Specifically on the tariffs that have been announced on integrated circuits, those are still subject to public comment through the end of July, so those are not in place yet. Once they go into effect, or if they go into effect, remember they will apply to goods that are deemed of Chinese origin that are then imported into the United States.

For TI, only about 13% of our revenue is imported into the United States. In other words, 87% of our revenue is exports, so not subject to U.S. tariffs and that 13%, only a sliver of that has Chinese origin – would be deemed as Chinese origin. So bottom line, only about 1% of our revenue would have those tariffs applied to it and that's before we make any potential adjustments, supply chain or other things that we could do to even minimize that impact further. So at the end of the day, we don't see a major or even – or any direct impact other than some minimal impact.

Now, that's not to say that at a macro level that could have an impact but that's a very macro comment that goes beyond TI and beyond the semiconductor industry that free trade or anything against free trade between the two largest economies in the world that could eventually have a macro effect that would be detrimental to everybody.

<A - David Pahl>: Do you have a follow on, Ross?

<Q - Ross C. Seymore>: Yeah, I do. Just switching back to your product segments. It seemed like Analog, sequentially was pretty much in line with what we've seen for the last few years but Embedded was lower and Other was much higher than what we've seen, and I know you guys think of things y-over-y, but if we look at it sequentially, are there any reasons behind the Embedded being lower and the Other being so much higher?

<A - David Pahl>: Yeah, I think if you look at Embedded, it has a higher percentage of comms equipment so it was impacted by that.

And then in Other, don't forget that we've got calculators sit inside of that business, so we've got strong seasonality in second and third quarter, so thank you, Ross, for those questions and we'll go to the next caller, please.

<Q - Amit Daryanani>: Maybe first off, could you quantify the revenue impact you had from [indiscernible] 00:21:03) but product rationalization or product optimization that you guys went through in the June quarter? And does that revenue headwind, if you may, flow into the September quarter as well to some degree?

<A - David Pahl>: Amit, can you clarify by what you mean by product rationalization?

<Q - Amit Daryanani>: Yeah. I think, Dave, when you talked about the consumer-centric markets, you talked about how some of the revenue declines there were driven by the fact that you just decided not to participate in some of these markets, a reflection of how your R&D budgets have tracked over time. Is that fair? And if so, I guess, how much was that revenue impact driven by?

<A - David Pahl>: Well, I think if you look and we shared this back in February on our capital management call, as we looked at allocating resources across end markets and specifically in personal electronics, when you compare our spend there vs. 5 and 10 years ago, it's lower. No, it's not zero. There's still good opportunities that we find inside of personal electronics and continue to invest. We're just looking for sustainable growth opportunities inside of that space, so that's really what we're talking about.

So again, I think, the first question came in specifically about one of the businesses inside of our Analog segment. I think you have to judge the efficiency of our capital allocation by the total results and that we're quite pleased with. So does that help to answer your question?

<Q - Amit Daryanani>: Yes, – no, that's helpful. And, I guess, if I could just follow-up, you guys have had multiple quarters of gross margin expansion very consistently on a y-over-y basis. As you think about the back half of 2018, could you maybe talk about what are the levers that can enable gross margins to continue to expand from here and do you feel comfortable that gross margin should expand in the back half?

<**A - Rafael R. Lizardi**>: Yeah, so I'll go ahead and take that, Amit. As we talked about in capital management and in other settings, our focus for value creation for the owners of the company is FCF per share. It's not gross margin. It's not operating margin. It's dollars of FCF per share, so the opportunity for expanding that and continuing to grow that are simple. It's the top line as we continue to invest in the best products and the best markets; and the best markets because that's where the semiconductor content is expanding and we continue to gain share there. And then 300-millimeter. We have talked about that for a number of years.

As of last year, about $4B of our revenue went through 300-millimeter. Four out of 10 in the Analog space, so that leaves a lot of room for continued expansion in 300-millimeter and continuing to grow the FCF per share.

<**Q - Harlan Sur**>: A solid job on the quarterly execution and strong FCF generation. Your focus markets, automotive, you've got 5 subsegments; industrial, you've got 14 subsegments. Can you guys just give us a sense on the breadth of the y-over-y growth in these markets? Were a majority of these subsegments up y-over-y? And any color here would be helpful.

<**A - David Pahl**>: Yeah, Amit – I'm sorry, Harlan, when you look at that growth, we're really pleased with it. It's very broad-based and when you look at all of the sectors, out of the 19 combined that we had, 18 of them actually grew. So it's very broad-based.

I think when you look across different products, different investments, when we look at our design-ins and our pipeline, those continue to be very broad-based, so that gives us confidence in the sustainability of that growth. And, of course, it doesn't mean that we won't see typical headwinds at some point, but when you look at it from a 5- and 10-year standpoint, we feel really good about the progress that we've made.

<**Q - Harlan Sur**>: Yes.

<**A - David Pahl**>: Do you have a follow on Harlan?

<**Q - Harlan Sur**>: Yeah. No, thanks for the insights there. And so kind of to follow-up on that, maybe from a geographical perspective, right, I think last quarter, all regions and I know this is [ph] ship to (00:25:36), right? This is [ph] ship to (00:25:37) data, but still nevertheless important. But last quarter I think all regions were up except for Japan. What did you see this quarter?

<**A - David Pahl**>: That is the same story. And my friends in Japan, I've talked to them a couple of times, they're – to give them a shout out to them that the revenue is down, but when you look at – we've got some reporting tools that will allow us to look through what we call channel independent reporting, and as you mentioned, it's a [ph] ship to (00:26:08), so they're continuing to make progress with the customers there.

Just a lot of that revenue ends up shipping either somewhere in Asia or it ships in Europe or in the U.S., even though it's designed in there, so. But the actual measurements that we have is the shipping label on the box. So unfortunately, they're still called out on the conference call, which I know they're not happy about.

<**Q - Vivek Arya**>: For the first one, your CapEx is now, I think, it was over 6% in Q2. I think trailing four quarters, it's 5.5%. Depreciation is now below CapEx. So where are all these incremental investments going, and what is the right long-term model we should assume for CapEx and depreciation?

<**A - Rafael R. Lizardi**>: Yeah, let me take that. First, let me step back to remind you what the objective is, right, for CapEx. It's to invest to support new technology development and revenue growth, and specifically to extend our low-cost manufacturing advantage, including 300-millimeter, which maximizes our opportunity to grow FCF per share for the long-term.

So, the percent of revenue is an interesting metric to have in mind, but the real driver is that long-term growth of FCF per share. So we have been – and in periods of sustained strong demand, that CapEx tends to go up and that's part of what you're seeing.

That CapEx is going primarily to support 300-millimeter. There are other things. There's assembly/test, there's even other factories where we invest some of that CapEx. But predominantly, it's to continue to expand that footprint of 300-millimeter within our fab and the [indiscernible] (00:28:16) existing factory.

Before you go to the next question, I want to go ahead and make a point on our FCF growth. In the trailing 12-months, FCF grew $1.7B from about $4B to $5.7B, a 42% increase. So what was that, what drove that?

First and foremost, our profit before tax grew about $1B in that comparison. So that is higher revenue, more revenue driven by industrial and automotive, which again, drove the majority of the revenue growth, and more 300-millimeter, which, to the question earlier, that continues to help with the expansion of FCF.

And then second and obviously, tax reform. So in the United States, we have tax reform, and as we have talked about, that did lower our tax rate in 2018 vs. the previous year in a significant way. Additionally, we had about $200mm YTD of onetime tax-related benefits that are also associated with tax reform. So, that also played a factor in that comparison.

<A - David Pahl>: Okay. Vivek, do you have a follow-up?

<Q - Vivek Arya>: Yes. Thanks, Dave. Beyond just the trade issue, I know there's been talk of shortages of [ph] passive (00:29:36) components. I know you guys don't supply that, but your other peers do. But have you seen your customers behave in a different way, stock up, stock down on various things that might impact your trajectory just because your customers might be short of other components to help complete their systems?

<A - David Pahl>: Yeah, Vivek, I think one thing that we've spent a lot of time trying to do and remain focused on is keeping lead times stable. And for the vast majority of our products, they've continued to remain stable. And that doesn't mean that we don't have hotspots and, of course, we'll work with customers to close those gaps as aggressively as we can. And the other important metric that we look at inside of that is on-time shipping performance. So you've got a stated lead time, and if you're not shipping inside of that, customers tend to get nervous. And that has continued to remain at very, very high-levels.

So, we can't see any bottlenecks from customers not being able to get product from other places that shows up in the order book, specifically. Could it be there? It certainly could be, but it's not something that we would have visibility into. So I think if we just remain focused on what we can control, which is the lead times and shipping performance, customers can have confidence in getting product from us. Okay. We'll go to the next caller, please.

<Q - Stacy Aaron Rasgon>: My first one is to ask about the nearer term OpEx trajectory. Normally, in Q3, you'd probably be down a little bit sequentially. Is there any drivers or anything that could be going on that would make things into this Q3 different than what we might ordinarily see given, I guess, some of the historical trends that we've seen leading into this?

<A - Rafael R. Lizardi>: So, Stacy, as you know, we give revenue guidance and EPS guidance and stop it at that, unless there were any unusual trends. And, if so – right between the lines and if so we would point that out. We're not pointing that out because there's nothing unusual, so you should expect just our usual trends within reasonable ranges.

<A - David Pahl>: Do you have a follow-on, Stacy?

<Q - Stacy Aaron Rasgon>: I do. Thank you. There was an earlier question on CapEx, and we know it's elevated now because you guys are out looking for other assets. At the same time, obviously, as you continue to grow, you're filling up 300-millimeter and that's a margin benefit. Do you think over time the benefit from increasing penetration in 300-millimeter more than offsets the depreciation expense on your gross margins?

<A - Rafael R. Lizardi>: Well, so the way I like to look at this is from a cash standpoint. So, I think of that investment as cash – as an investment, cash going out, the first cell on your spreadsheet, and then after that is return. I don't think about it for those purposes from a depreciation standpoint. So, as we continue to invest on 300-millimeter, we think those are very good long-term investments that will last for a long time any time we put any of these tools in place, and the cash fall-through on those investments is pretty high.

<Q - Joseph Moore>: I know you said that some of your personal electronics markets were up and some were down. Can you give maybe a little bit more color on which? And I know smartphones in particular, I think, grew in Q1. Did smartphones continue to grow into Q2? Thanks.

<A - David Pahl>: Yeah, Joe, I won't go into that level of detail. We did want to give some color on what was going on inside of personal electronics, that we saw multiple sectors growing inside of there. We had some customers that were growing, but also wanted to point out not all customers were growing. So, that's what we saw.

I think what that illustrates is the power of having a diverse product portfolio and being able to sell to multiple customers. And kind of to my point earlier, when we look at the opportunity inside of personal electronics, longer-term, we don't see that as a significant growth engine for us, but it is a place that we continue to invest. And we really believe the majority of the growth is really going to come from industrial and automotive. So incrementally, as we've taken up our spend, we've moved it more into those growth areas. So – but again, we're going to have handsets and PCs and those other things for decades to come. So, we find good opportunities inside of there and want to continue to invest in them. Do you have a follow-on, Joe?

<Q - Joseph Moore>: Yeah, thanks for the color there. In terms of a longer-term question on communications infrastructure, obviously, it's been thought for everyone in the last few quarters. How do you think about the 5G opportunity amid the comments you've made just now and repeatedly that the investment areas are industrial and automotive? Do you think that there's an opportunity around 5G that you need to invest in? And just help us understand how that'll affect TI.

<A - David Pahl>: Sure. Yeah, so I think again, I'd refer back to our capital management presentation as we walked through that thinking, remains consistent with that. So from a comms equipment standpoint, I would say that our investments have shifted over time. If you look at the 5G standards and the things needed to support the new things, new frequencies being added, things like the massive MIMO, antennas that are going in for beam forming and other things like that, that is all complexity that you find in the radio itself. And for us, that translates into Analog products to be able to support that. So, our spend in Analog is up for supporting that 5G transition. It has been for some time when we look at our spend versus, say, 5 and 10 years ago. But at the same time, that same change in standards and mix really doesn't impact the digital side. So, our spend actually is down on that. So, again, I'd describe our growth primarily coming from industrial and automotive as we look over the next decade. So that's where we've tried to increase spending, but we will shift spending around to take advantage of things like 5G. And I'd just say that in general, very confident in our position, and we've got – we're building off of our great position inside of 4G as well. So, we are very pleased with those investments.

Rafael R. Lizardi

Closing Remarks

So before we close, I just want to make a point since it wasn't asked, but our result, among other things, demonstrate our continued disciplined execution on capital management strategy

We generated on a trailing 12-month basis, $5.7B of FCF, and we returned $5.6B of FCF in that timeframe

So virtually, all FCF generated was returned to the owners of the company

That was both through dividends and buybacks. In the case of dividends, on that comparison, it was 41% of FCF. So right between our 40% and 60% guidance, but clearly towards the lower end, so that just underscores the sustainability of those dividends