

protect data, applications, and users from network- and contentlevel security threats across firewall, software defined networking (SD-WAN), Wifi and switch (LAN Edge) and secure access edge

own 19.5% of the common stock; Vanguard Group, 8.8%; Black-Rock, 7.1% (5/24 proxy). Address: 899 Kifer Road Sunnyvale, CA 94086. Tel.: (408) 235-7700. Internet: www.fortinet.com.

Fortinet's impressive fourth-quarter results likely marked a peak in earnings growth. Continued healthy software trends were aided by a sales recovery in the firewall product business. The latter operations endured a customer inventory buildup early in 2024, but segment revenues jumped 18% in the December period. Despite solid double-digit billings growth, and its implied steady demand, we see overall earnings growth slowing to just 2% in 2025 due to much tighter margins, resulting from a mix shift (see below)

Renewed firewall business will help overall results, despite an adverse impact on margins. Last year's ballooning margins stemmed from the drop in the less-profitable product business. We think that margins may slim by 180 basis points this year with a smaller percentage of software in the mix, as well as modestly higher R&D and marketing costs. More importantly, a sizeable portion of older firewall products will come off service contracts soon. This will spark demand for higher priced software services in the latter half of 2025 and into 2026.

The longer-term outlook is still attrac-

tive. Wall Street is looking through the current earnings slowdown and seems to appreciate the improving cash flow prospects. Free cash flow should rise this year, thanks to lower capex and better working capital efficiencies. A hefty cash balance is helping produce sizeable contributions from other income, too. Looking further out, Fortinet is positioned well for success. Internally-developed Fortios technology products are trusted by its 800,000 installed customer base. Growth ought to keep pace with overall industry trends, which are forecast to rise steadily thanks to mounting AI-related threats and a constant need for cybersecurity protection.

The stock is ranked to outperform the market averages in the coming six to 12 months. The valuation is somewhat elevated on a historical basis. Plus, a relatively low (30) Price Stability score adds further risk. Capital-appreciation potential over the long haul is not exciting at the current price, but interested buy-and-hold investors should keep an eye on this stock for opportunities presented by frequent pullbacks in price. Charles C. Moran April 11, 2025

(A) Fully diluted GAAP earnings. (B) Excludes non-recurring gains/(losses): '09, \$0.59; '17, (\$0.63); '18, \$0.71; '20, \$0.16. Next earnings report due early May. May not sum to (D) In millions. adj. for split.

Accts. Pavable

Debt Due Other

Current Liab

ANNUAL RATES

of change (per sh)

Revenues "Cash Flow

Earnings Dividends

**Book Value** 

954.8

1262

353

1540

.17

.31

.39

.46

Cal-

endar

2022

2023

2024

2025

2026

Cal-

endar

2022

2023

2024

2025

2026

Cal-

endar

2021

2022

2023

2025

243.4

2835.0

3078.4

Past

10 Yrs.

24.0% 38.0%

40.5%

**QUARTERLY REVENUES (\$ mill.)** 

Mar.31 Jun.30 Sep.30 Dec.31

1149

1335

1508

1725

1955

29

.41

.70

.64

.70

EARNINGS PER SHARE AB

1030

1293

1434

1625

1845

Mar.31 Jun.30 Sep.30

.21

.33

.49

.50

.55

QUARTERLY DIVIDENDS PAID

Mar.31 Jun.30 Sep.30 Dec.31

NO CASH DIVIDENDS

**BEING PAID** 

204.3

3514.7

3719.0

Past

5 Yrs.

26.0% 43.5%

46.0%

1283

1414

1660

1885

2150

Dec.31

.39

.40

.68

.70

190.9

3869.8

4060.7

Est'd '22-'24

to '28-'30

13.5%

13.0%

Nil NMF

Full

Year

4417.4

5304.8

5955.8

6775

7675

Full

Year

1.06

1.46

2.26

2.30

2.50

Full

total due to rounding.
(C) Includes intangibles and goodwill. In 2024: \$530.4 mill., or \$0.69 per share.

Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability B++ 30 Price Growth Persistence 95 **Earnings Predictability** 90