

First Read

PDD Holdings Inc 2Q24 beat but outlook confusing

2Q24 beat on margin

Revenue +86% YoY at Rmb97bn, slightly missed cons by 2%, mainly on online marketing services (OMS). **Adj. OP/NP** came in at Rmb35.0bn/Rmb34.4bn, beat cons by 14%/16%, or 36.0%/35.5% margin at a historic high.

Key focuses

1) Domestic take rate (slight -ve): Online Marketing Services (OMS) +29% YoY (missed by 3%) on an estimated +25% GMV with take rate uplift moderating. Looking ahead, management planned for a Rmb10bn (or c4% of total OMS & fee income) subsidies to merchants for a healthy ecosystem. We expect its overall take rate to stay flattish at 4.8% for 2H24 and 2025E as better ad algorithm should help offset. 2) Margin outlook (-ve): Despite intense competition in China and Temu's expansion, S&M remains prudent in 2Q, steady at 27% of revenue. Management guided for a lower profitability ahead amid increased platform investments. 3) Temu's margin (+ve): GPM improved 2nd consecutive quarters, +3% QoQ to 65% in 2Q. We attribute that to Temu's operational improvement including ASP uplift through expanding its product mark-up, as well as fulfilment cost reduction through operating leverage and negotiating for better deals with logistics companies. We see further upside ahead as the scale of its margin-accretive semi-managed model continues to expand, from the current c10% contribution. We estimate Temu to breakeven in 4Q. 4) Shareholder return (-ve): Mgmt sees PDD still in an investment phase, so does not plan share buyback or dividends for the next several years.

What to do with the stock?

Net net, we think it is a solid set of results with growth and profitability holding up despite competition. What confused investors is the managements' tone and strategies, which are inconsistent with the industry trends we observed. They include PDD's: 1) plan to partially waive merchant fee; whereas BABA is introducing service fee starting Sep and raising take rate, 2) claim of increased market competition; while BABA and Douyin are in fact de-emphasizing low price competition, 3) guidance on lower profitability ahead; while most internet operators are focusing on improving margins, and 4) refusal to do shareholder return; despite having US\$48bn of net cash and Temu gradually turns profit. Investors seem unsure whether PDD sees something that we don't or they are just being overly conservative amid the uncertain macro. Stock view: Post result, we lower EPS by 3-9% as the improvement in Temu partially offset increased investment domestically. Despite PDD's undemanding valuation (8x P/E vs c60% EPS growth from 2023-25E), investors may stay on the sidelines near term to assess the right level of profit after management's guidance. Sector view: At this stage, we don't anticipate a

Equities

China

Internet Services

12-month rating Buy

12m price target US\$250.00 *Prior* : *US\$272.00*

Price (26 Aug 2024) US\$105.98

RIC: PDD.O BBG: PDD US

Trading data and key metrics

52-wk range US\$157.57-80.76 Market cap. US\$143b Shares o/s 1.354m (COM) Free float 100% Avg. daily volume ('000) 7.007 Avg. daily value (m) US\$973 Common s/h equity (12/24E) Rmb333b P/BV (12/24E) 3.1x Net debt to EBITDA (12/24E) NM

EPS (UBS, diluted) (Rmb)

	From	То	% ch	Cons.
12/24E	100.28	97.15	-3	86.85
12/25E	125.23	114.34	-9	112.05
12/26E	150.07	137.26	-9	137.67

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Highlights (Rmbm)	12/21	12/22	12/23	12/24E	12/25E	12/26E	12/27E	12/28E
Revenues	93,950	130,558	247,639	404,324	531,962	601,841	672,916	746,995
EBIT (UBS)	11,671	38,120	65,778	143,967	175,187	212,644	248,523	280,364
Net earnings (UBS)	13,830	39,530	67,899	143,922	169,392	203,343	236,143	265,727
EPS (UBS, diluted) (Rmb)	9.56	27.45	46.36	97.15	114.34	137.26	159.40	179.37
DPS (net) (Rmb)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net (debt) / cash	54,255	76,839	115,900	316,072	517,346	742,591	999,943	1,285,114
Profitability/valuation	12/21	12/22	12/23	12/24E	12/25E	12/26E	12/27E	12/28E
EBIT (UBS) margin %	12.4	29.2	26.6	35.6	32.9	35.3	36.9	37.5
ROIC (EBIT) %	(18.2)	(54.5)	(82.1)	(126.8)	(112.2)	(117.0)	(123.1)	(126.9)
EV/EBITDA (UBS core) x	60.3	7.4	8.4	4.5	2.5	1.1	0.0	0.0
P/E (UBS, diluted) x	79.6	13.8	14.0	7.8	6.6	5.5	4.7	4.2
Equity FCF (UBS) yield %	2.7	10.0	11.5	19.6	19.7	22.1	25.2	27.9
Dividend yield (net) %	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: Company accounts, LSEG Eikon, UBS estimates. Metrics marked as (UBS) have had analyst adjustments applied. Valuations: based on an average share price that year, (E): based on a share price of US\$ 105.98 on 26-Aug-2024 10:08:15 EDT

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meaningful step up in competition within e-commerce. This is because PDD's subsidies is mainly focused on the merchants but not directly to consumers. Besides, PDD's take rate is higher than peers, implying lower pressure for the others to cut. **Sector picks:** With the lack of near term catalysts, we remove PDD as our top pick, and most prefer names with earnings visibility and catalysts like Tencent & BABA.

Valuation: Lower PT to US\$250 (from US\$272); maintain Buy rating

With slower topline growth and increased investments, we lower 2024E-26E adj. EPS by 3-9%, and hence our SOTP-based price target on lower multiple.

Figure 1: PDD 2Q24 result summary

RMB m	2Q23	1Q24	2Q24	QoQ	YoY	Cons	+/-
Total revenues	52,281	86,812	97,060	12%	86%	99,109	-2%
Online marketing services	37,933	42,456	49,116	16%	29%	50,449	-3%
Transaction services	14,348	44,356	47,944	8%	234%	48,602	-1%
Gross profit	33,591	54,117	63,361	17%	89%	61,080	4%
GP margin	64.3%	62.3%	65.3%	2.9 ppt	1.0 ppt	61.6%	3.7 ppt
Non-GAAP S&M expense	(16,553)	(22,738)	(25,411)	12%	54%	(26,850)	-5%
% of revenue	31.7%	26.2%	26.2%	0.0 ppt	-5.5 ppt	27.1%	-0.9 ppt
Non-GAAP G&A expense	(370)	(572)	(594)	4%	60%	(746)	-20%
% of revenue	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.0 ppt	-0.1 ppt	0.8%	-0.1 ppt
Non-GAAP R&D expense	(2,087)	(2,273)	(2,407)	6%	15%	(2,573)	-6%
% of revenue	4.0%	2.6%	2.5%	-0.1 ppt	-1.5 ppt	2.6%	-0.1 ppt
Non-GAAP operating income	14,609	28,552	34,987	23%	139%	30,776	14%
Non-GAAP OP margin	27.9%	32.9%	36.0%	3.2 ppt	8.1 ppt	31.1%	5.0 ppt
Non-GAAP net income	15,269	30,602	34,432	13%	125%	29,732	16%
Non-GAAP net margin	29.2%	35.3%	35.5%	0.2 ppt	6.3 ppt	30.0%	5.5 ppt

Source: Company data, Visible Alpha

Figure 2: UBSe 2024E-26E estimate changes

	N	ew estimates		Pr	ior estimates			% chg	
(Rmb m)	2024E	2025E	2026E	2024E	2025E	2026E	2024E	2025E	2026E
GMV	5,214,071	6,089,803	6,895,814	5,278,442	6,164,986	6,980,947	-1.2%	-1.2%	-1.2%
ARPU - TTM (Rmb)	5,376	6,344	7,168	5,442	6,422	7,257	-1.2%	-1.2%	-1.2%
AAC - TTM (mn)	970	960	962	970	960	962	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Net Revenue	404,324	531,962	601,841	437,578	568,741	652,292	-7.6%	-6.5%	-7.7%
Online marketing services	198,951	223,968	253,947	199,080	232,011	266,111	-0.1%	-3.5%	-4.6%
Transaction services	205,372	307,994	347,893	238,498	336,730	386,181	-13.9%	-8.5%	-9.9%
Gross profit	258,568	340,455	377,956	272,241	358,307	409,639	-5.0%	-5.0%	-7.7%
GPM (%)	64.0%	64.0%	62.8%	62.2%	63.0%	62.8%	1.7 ppt	1.0 ppt	0.0 ppt
Non-GAAP S&M expense	(102,101)	(148,949)	(147,451)	(110,371)	(141,048)	(142,200)	-7.5%	5.6%	3.7%
% of revenue	25.3%	28.0%	24.5%	25.2%	24.8%	21.8%	0.0 ppt	3.2 ppt	2.7 ppt
Non-GAAP G&A expense	(2,488)	(3,192)	(3,611)	(2,779)	(3,128)	(3,588)	10.5%	-2.0%	-0.7%
% of revenue	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.0 ppt	0.1 ppt	0.1 ppt
Non-GAAP R&D expense	(10,147)	(13,299)	(14,444)	(11,042)	(13,783)	(15,155)	8.1%	3.5%	4.7%
% of revenue	2.5%	2.5%	2.4%	2.5%	2.4%	2.3%	0.0 ppt	0.1 ppt	0.1 ppt
Core	152,801	170,538	194,959	156,848	181,850	208,657	-2.6%	-6.2%	-6.6%
DDMC	3,059	4,100	5,392	3,157	4,100	5,392	-3.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Temu	(11,893)	549	12,293	(11,819)	14,572	34,848	-0.6%	-96.2%	-64.7%
Non-GAAP Operating Profit	143,967	175,187	212,644	148,186	200,522	248,896	-2.8%	-12.6%	-14.6%
Non-GAAP OPM (%)	35.6%	32.9%	35.3%	33.9%	35.3%	38.2%	1.7 ppt	-2.3 ppt	-2.8 ppt
Non-GAAP Net Income	143,922	169,392	203,343	148,088	184,928	221,615	-2.8%	-8.4%	-8.2%
Non-GAAP NPM (%)	35.6%	31.8%	33.8%	33.8%	32.5%	34.0%	1.8 ppt	-0.7 ppt	-0.2 ppt
Diluted GAAP EPS (Rmb)	90.4	105.7	127.5	93.0	116.0	139.5	-2.8%	-8.8%	-8.6%
Non-GAAP Diluted EPS (Rmb)	97.15	114.34	137.26	100.28	125.23	150.07	-3.1%	-8.7%	-8.5%

Source: Company data, UBS estimates

Figure 3: PDD valuation

	GMV (Rmb bn)	OP (Rmb m)	NP (Rmb m)	Target P/E (x)	Valuation (US\$ bn)	Price (US\$)	% value	Valuation methodology
Core e-commerce	5,303	170,538	144,957	13	261.7	177	73%	13x 2025E P/E
Duoduo grocery	265	4,100	3,485	13	6.3	4	2%	13x 2025E P/E
Temu	522	20,869	17,739	20	49.3	33	14%	20x of 4% OP margin on 2025E GMV
Net cash					41.1	28	11%	2024E
Total (end-2024)					358.4	241.9		
Price target (Aug-2025)						250		

Source: Company data, UBS estimates

Forecast returns

Forecast price appreciation	135.9%
Forecast dividend yield	0.0%
Forecast stock return	135.9%
Market return assumption	11.1%
Forecast excess return	124.8%

Company Description

PDD Holdings is a leading e-commerce platform in China. It focuses on value-for-money products, with lower ASP than peers. The company started with a 'team purchase' shopping model, which allows its buyers to share product information on social platforms such as Weixin/WeChat and QQ, and invite friends and family to purchase items together at more attractive prices. In recent years, PDD has also been expanding into new businesses, including community group buying (Duoduo Grocery, a leader in e-grocery) and international e-commerce (Temu).

Valuation Method and Risk Statement

We derive our price target from a SOTP-based methodology. We believe the key risks for PDD are: 1) liabilities from counterfeit or illegal products sold; 2) competition from other ecommerce companies; 3) challenges in expanding product offerings; and 4) regulatory risks.

Our price target for Tencent is based on SOTP. We believe the key risks for Tencent include: 1) an evolving and intensifying competitive

landscape; 2) new business execution; 3) integration of invested companies and businesses; 4) rising costs of traffic acquisition, content and brand promotions; 5) IT system upkeep; 6) expansion into international markets; 7) infringement of intellectual property rights; 8) departures of key management; and 9) regulatory risks.

Our price target on BABA is based on SOTP. We believe the key risks for Alibaba are: 1) regulatory changes, particularly for data usage and online content; 2) Chinese and global macroeconomic headwinds; 3) competitive pressure from traditional offline retailers; 4) the interruption of information technology and systems; 5) short-term profitability pressure from long-term investments; 6) execution and management complexities resulting from its multiple platforms; 7) corporate governance – significant voting control by the Alibaba Partnership; and 8) the loss of the services of founder Jack Ma.

Quantitative Research Review

UBS Global Research publishes a quantitative assessment of its analysts' responses to certain questions about the likelihood of an occurrence of a number of short term factors in a product known as the 'Quantitative Research Review'. The views for this month can be found below. Views contained in this assessment on a particular stock reflect only the views on those short term factors which are a different timeframe to the 12-month timeframe reflected in any equity rating set out in this note. For previous responses please make reference to (i) previous UBS Global Research reports; and (ii) where no applicable research report was published that month, the Quantitative Research Review which can be found at https://neo.ubs.com/quantitative, or contact your UBS sales representative for access to the report or the Quantitative Research Team on qa@ubs.com. A consolidated report which contains all responses is also available and again you should contact your UBS sales representative for details and pricing or the Quantitative Research Team on the email above.

PDD Holdings Inc

Question	Response
1. Is the industry structure facing the firm likely to improve or deteriorate over the next six months? Rate on a scale of 1-5 (1 = getting worse, 3 = no change, 5 = getting better, N/A = no view)	2
2. Is the regulatory/government environment facing the firm likely to improve or deteriorate over the next six months? Rate on a scale of 1-5 (1 = getting tougher 3 = no change, 5 = getting better, N/A = no view)	2
3. Over the last 3-6 months in broad terms have things been improving/no change/getting worse for this stock? Rate on a scale of 1-5 (1 = getting a lot worse, 3 = not much change, 5 = getting a lot better, N/A = no view)	4
4. Relative to the current CONSENSUS EPS forecast, is the next company EPS update likely to lead to: (1 = negative surprise vs consensus, 3 = in-line with consensus, 5 = positive surprise vs consensus expectations, N/A = no view)	4
5. What's driving the difference?	
6. Relative to YOUR current earnings forecast, is there relatively greater risk at the next earnings result of:(1 = downside skew risk to earnings, 3 = equal upside or downside risk to earnings, 5 = upside skew risk to earnings, N/A = no view)	4
7. What's driving the difference?	
8. Is there an upcoming catalyst for the company over the next three months?	Negative Catalyst
9. Is there an actual or approximate date for the catalyst?	
10. Is the catalyst date an actual or approximate date?	
11. What is the catalyst?	

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12-Month Rating	Definition	Coverage ¹	IB Services ²
Buy	FSR is > 6% above the MRA.	52%	25%
Neutral	FSR is between -6% and 6% of the MRA.	40%	22%
Sell	FSR is > 6% below the MRA.	8%	21%
Short-Term Rating	Definition	Coverage ³	IB Services ⁴
Buy	Stock price expected to rise within three months from the time the rating was assigned because of a specific catalyst or event.	<1%	<1%
Sell	Stock price expected to fall within three months from the time the rating was assigned because of a specific catalyst or event.	<1%	<1%

Source: UBS. Rating allocations are as of 30 June 2024.

- 1:Percentage of companies under coverage globally within the 12-month rating category.
- 2:Percentage of companies within the 12-month rating category for which investment banking (IB) services were provided within the past 12 months.
- 3: Percentage of companies under coverage globally within the Short-Term rating category.
- 4:Percentage of companies within the Short-Term rating category for which investment banking (IB) services were provided within the past 12 months.

KEY DEFINITIONS: Forecast Stock Return (FSR) is defined as expected percentage price appreciation plus gross dividend yield over the next 12 months. In some cases, this yield may be based on accrued dividends. **Market Return Assumption (MRA)** is defined as the one-year local market interest rate plus 5% (a proxy for, and not a forecast of, the equity risk premium). **Under Review (UR)** Stocks may be flagged as UR by the analyst, indicating that the stock's price target and/or rating are subject to possible change in the near term, usually in response to an event that may affect the investment case or valuation. **Short-Term Ratings** reflect the expected near-term (up to three months) performance of the stock and do not reflect any change in the fundamental view or investment case. **Equity Price Targets** have an investment horizon of 12 months.

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Company Disclosures

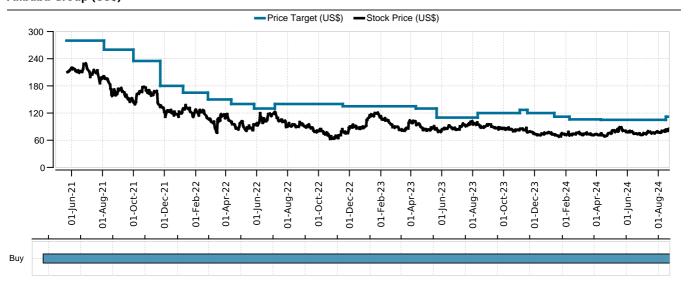
Company Name	Reuters	12-month rating	Price	Price date
Alibaba Group ^{5,28,16a,16b}	BABA.N	Buy	US\$85.41	23 Aug 2024
PDD Holdings Inc ^{28,16b}	PDD.O	Buy	US\$139.87	23 Aug 2024
Tencent Holdings ^{4,16a}	0700.HK	Buy	HK\$382.00	26 Aug 2024

Source: UBS Global Research; LSEG Eikon. All prices as of local market close. Ratings in this table are the most current published ratings prior to this report. They may be more recent than the stock pricing date.

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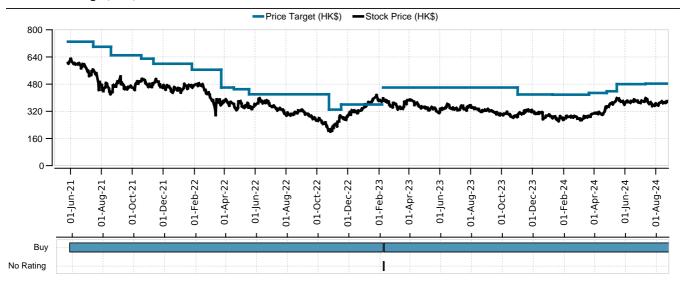
Alibaba Group (US\$)



Rating	Price Target (US\$)	Stock Price (US\$)	Date
Buy	280.00	211.06	2021-05-21
Buy	260.00	197.38	2021-08-03
Buy	235.00	148.05	2021-09-30
Buy	180.00	136.62	2021-11-22
Buy	165.00	126.63	2022-01-06
Buy	150.00	108.93	2022-02-24
Buy	140.00	101.55	2022-04-11
Buy	130.00	94.48	2022-05-26
Buy	140.00	119.12	2022-07-06
Buy	135.00	84.26	2022-11-17
Buy	130.00	101.54	2023-04-10
Buy	110.00	83.98	2023-05-21
Buy	120.00	99.21	2023-08-10
Buy	127.00	82.48	2023-11-01
Buy	120.00	79.11	2023-11-16
Buy	112.00	72.88	2024-01-08
Buy	106.00	73.64	2024-02-07
Buy	105.00	72.99	2024-04-09
Buy	112.00	79.54	2024-08-15

Source: UBS Global Research; LSEG Eikon as of 23-Aug-2024. All prices as of local market close. Ratings as of date shown.

Tencent Holdings (HK\$)

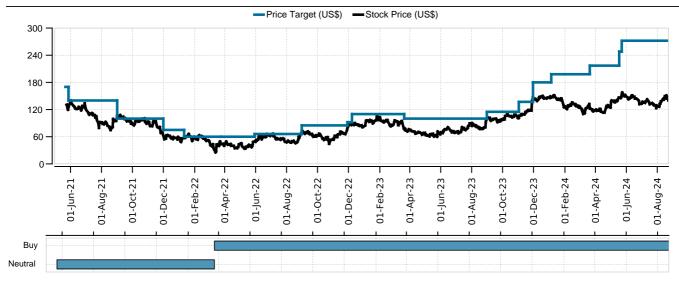


Rating	Price Target (HK\$)	Stock Price (HK\$)	Date
Buy	730.00	618.00	2021-05-26
Buy	700.00	565.00	2021-07-15
Buy	650.00	421.20	2021-08-19
Buy	630.00	497.00	2021-10-18
Buy	600.00	477.60	2021-11-11
Buy	565.00	473.60	2022-01-26
Buy	460.00	356.40	2022-03-25
Buy	450.00	364.00	2022-04-19
Buy	420.00	341.80	2022-05-19
Buy	330.00	206.20	2022-10-24
Buy	360.00	292.00	2022-11-17
No Ratino	-	376.80	2023-02-06
Buy	460.00	382.20	2023-02-08
Buy	419.00	287.00	2023-11-01
Buy	418.00	283.60	2024-01-09
Buy	428.00	291.20	2024-03-21
Buy	438.00	339.40	2024-04-25

Rating	Price Target (HK\$)	Stock Price (HK\$)	Date
Buy	480.00	381.80	2024-05-15
Buy	483.00	384.80	2024-07-11

Source: UBS Global Research; LSEG Eikon as of 26-Aug-2024. All prices as of local market close. Ratings as of date shown.

PDD Holdings Inc (US\$)



Date	Stock Price (US\$)	Price Target (US\$)	Rating
2021-05-21	129.29	170.00	Neutral
2021-05-27	119.66	140.00	Neutral
2021-08-31	100.02	100.00	Neutral
2021-11-30	66.50	75.00	Neutral
2022-01-10	56.99	60.00	Neutral
2022-03-23	49.40	60.00	Buy
2022-05-29	48.30	66.00	Buy
2022-08-30	66.50	85.00	Buy
2022-11-28	74.05	92.00	Buy
2022-12-07	85.82	110.00	Buy
2023-03-20	78.91	100.00	Buy
2023-08-30	98.14	115.00	Buy
2023-11-01	102.93	137.00	Buy
2023-11-29	141.73	180.00	Buy
2024-01-04	147.74	198.00	Buy
2024-03-20	132.17	217.00	Buy
2024-05-17	146.19	248.00	Buy
2024-05-22	147.09	272.00	Buy

Source: UBS Global Research; LSEG Eikon as of 23-Aug-2024. All prices as of local market close. Ratings as of date shown.

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