Barrick Gold Corp. [NYSE:ABX] [TSE:ABX]

Barrick Gold is one of the largest gold miners in the world, producing 7.4 million ounces of gold in 2012. As one the worst performing sectors, the gold miners began to show attractiveness in value. Demanded by investors in the earlier gold bull market, caused by the Financial Crisis and Monetary Easing across Central Banks, majority of the gold miners have stopped all hedging activities. This provided investors with direct exposure to gold prices, however making operations very difficult to manage. Along with rising costs and lower gold price, the pressure is on the gold miners to begin hedging and revamping the business.

Air Canada [TSE:AC.B]

A historically competitive sector with razor thin margins has finally seen some light as Air Canada saw over 250% gains since its 2012 lows. The first profitable year since 2007 and a stronger load factor have helped the company regain investor confidence. The ridiculous gain in stock price is also propelled by the company’s high leverage. With debt over $3.8 billion, and $1.4 billion of which maturing in 2015, the company will need new capital to fund its operations. Much uncertainty still remains with the stock, but a clear path has been mapped out by company to improve profitability.

Blackberry Ltd. [NASDAQ:BBRY] [TSE:BB]

Formerly Research in Motion Ltd. and a Canadian technology giant, is now putting itself up for sale to private equity investors. In the past, the Canadian Government has been unclear on foreign acquisitions regulations, creating more uncertainty on top of already unpredictable Z10 and Q10 sales. Although the world seems to be crashing down on the company, Blackberry still holds a strong balance sheet with $3.1 billion in Cash and Investments, equivalent to $6/share more than half of the current stock price. Along with the portfolio of patents and strong subscriber base, the company may still sell for a good price.

Caterpillar Inc. [NYSE:CAT]

Caterpillar is the world’s largest manufacturer of construction machinery, a major player in mining and infrastructure projects. With 26% of total sales coming from Asia, a Chinese slow down can hurt growth for the company. While GDP growth target has been guided towards the lower 7%, industrial output has shown solid gains of 10.4%. The data coming from the world’s second largest economy has been sending mixed signals, creating uncertainty for the future of Caterpillar sales. Lower commodity prices on top of a Chinese slow down can add further pressure for the company. In the mist of all negativity, a recovering North America may provide enough boosts to revenue during global downtime.

GameStop Corp. [NYSE:GME]

GameStop is the world’s largest video game retailer, with more than 6000 stores worldwide. The next generation console will be the greatest short term boost to sales in both consoles and games, while the used game trading still provide a near 50% operating margin. However, the selling of physical games can be a great burden to the company as the game producers begin transitioning into digital content. The greatest irony is GameStop’s investment into online retailing can only help cannibalize its own physical games sales. With more than 200% gains since the 2012 lows, the stock will be facing much more pressure from investors taking profits ahead of new console releases.

LinkedIn Corp. [NYSE:LNKD]

Being part of the hot social network sector, LinkedIn has proven over 100% growth in revenue and profits in 2012. The network also gained dependency from its users to manage their professional profile, thus creating itself a wide economic moat. Hiring solutions have generated the majority of the sales, however the company has yet to show a sustainable business model to generate consistent cash flow. Being priced at over 700 times earnings, the firm seems to be able to justify its valuation year over year with growth.

Loblaw Companies Limited [TSE:L]

The Canadian food retail industry is experiencing some recent shake ups as Target enters Canada for the first time, Empire (owner of Sobey’s) acquires Safeway, and Loblaw acquires Shoppers Drug Mart. Shoppers being at a similar size to Loblaw, required the company to finance majority of the deal through debt, putting itself at a highly leveraged position. The merger can provider a significant improvement in operating margins, as well as efficiency from synergy, providing the new Loblaw with power for more aggressive pricing to compete with Target. With all players in Canadian food retail sector adapting to the ever more fierce competition, the market share can easily shift in any direction.

Procter & Gamble Co. [NYSE:PG]

P&G operates the world’s largest portfolio of household and personal-care brands, consisting of essential products ranging from detergents (Tide) to shampoos (Pantene) to make-ups (Olay) to pet goods (Iams). While the brands stayed strong in developed markets, the expansion into emerging markets did not go smoothly. The slower expansion pressures the company to improve the bottom line from other sources, as the CEO plans for a $10 billion cost cut over the next several years. Even with all the headwinds, investors can still find value with the growing 3% dividend yield.

Potash Corp. [NYSE:POT] [TSE:POT]

Similar to crude oil, the fertilizer potash sellers of the world also formed OPEC equivalents called Canadian Potash Exporters (Canpotex) and Belarusian Potash Company (BPC), allowing the exporting companies to form an oligopoly controlling 70% the world’s potash supply. The recently exit by Uralkali from BPC creates a threat of possible price competition across the international suppliers, punishing Potash Corp’s stock by 25% as a result. From a value standpoint, the current price can be attractive depending on how investors speculate the BPC situation.

Qualcomm Inc. [NASDAQ:QCOM]

A unique player in the wireless technology space, Qualcomm profits by collecting a 3% to 5% royalty on every 3G phone sold in exchange for the CDMA network technology in the 3G/4G communication processors. While poised to dominate the 4G space with royalty contracts from Nokia, Samsung, and LG, the firm is moving forward into smart watches as well as wireless charging for electric cars. On top of a 2% dividend yield, the board recently approved of a $5 billion share repurchase, yet still only pricing the company at 18 times earnings.

Rogers Communications Inc. [NYSE:RCI] [TSE:RCI.B]

One of the greatest beneficiaries from the growth in smartphone usage, Rogers continues to be a strong player in the wireless carriers. With Verizon giving up Canadian entry but three more considering, there will continue to be volatility within the sector. While difficult for small players to enter and gain market share, large players like AT&T or Vodafone can consider bidding for wireless spectrum in Canada, especially when encouraged by the Canadian Government to increase competition in the telecom sector. Federal Reserve tapering can further pressure the sector as dividend investors rotate in Fixed Income investments.

Royal Bank of Canada [NYSE:RY] [TSE:RY]

RBC is largest of the six Canadian banks that collectively hold almost 90% of the nation’s banking deposits. The Canadian banking sector’s dominance by the top six banks creates an oligopoly structure, thus giving RBC a narrow economic moat. While the sector has been very profitable in the past decade, the cooling real estate market as well as higher household debt will be the greatest pressure on continuing growth. As interest rates rise in the near future, residential loans may yield higher losses while improving margins on lending, creating a complex yet interesting company to look at.

Suncor Energy [NYSE:SU] [TSE:SU]

As Canada’s largest integrated oil company, Suncor has been improving operating efficiency since the merger with Petro Canada Inc. Being a highly vertically integrated company, Suncor has the ability to connect the oil producing assets with the downstream operations, further improving margins. Faced with the Syrian situation, the stock can expect higher volatility from the oil prices. As the U.S. becomes more energy independent, Canadian oil producers will be pressured to seek new exports businesses.

Tim Horton’s, Inc. [NYSE:THI] [TSE:THI]

A unique brand in the native Canadian restaurant sector, Tim Horton’s has a solid market share from the large loyal customer base. While performance within Canada has been satisfactory, the company has been struggling with international growth. At the same time, Starbucks and McDonald’s have continued to seek growth in the same area. Recent activism from Scout and Highfields Capital has pressured Tim Horton’s to cut U.S. spending and raise debt to repurchase shares. Investors responded with cheer to the move, but it does not benefit the company’s long term market share.