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## Li Ning（2331 HK）

## A resilient 1Q22 but we are prudent on 2Q22E

Given the worse than expected Covid－19 outbreaks，1Q22 retail sales growth was inline and impressive enough．We are now factoring a more conservative estimates for 2Q22E and FY22E．We reiterate BUY due to its undemanding valuation and potential improvement on investors＇sentiment，but lowered TP to HK\＄75．43，based on an unchanged 35x FY22E P／E．
－1Q22 operating numbers inline．Li Ning＇s 1Q22 retail sales grew by 25－30\％ YoY，inline with CMBI est．of $28 \%$ ，slightly behind Xtep＇s $30-35 \%$ but far better than Anta／FILA＇s high－teens／MSD growth and Pou Sheng＇s 25\％ decline．Given the worse than expected Covid－19 outbreaks in Shanghai and Northeast China，such result is decent enough．While e－commerce sales grew by $\sim 35 \%$ ，slowed down from $40-45 \%$ in 4Q21，direct retail sales growth was highly impressive at $\sim 35 \%$ ，even faster than $25-30 \%$ in 4 Q 21 ，we think it is reflecting the positives by Li Ning＇s reform on store productivity．
－Become more conservative about 2Q22E．Based on $40 \%+/ 15 \%$ YoY retail sale growth during Jan－Feb 2022／first 2 weeks in Mar 2022，we estimate the growth in Mar 2022／last 2 weeks in Mar 2022 to be $\sim 10 \% /$ flat．Also，on top of the high base due to XJ cotton last year，we are now expecting a $10 \%$ retail sales drop in 2Q22E（vs previous company＇s guidance of $5 \%$ growth）．
－We are now more prudent than the previous company＇s guidance． Management guided a high－teens to low $20 \%$ sales growth and high－teens NP margin for FY22E at the result call，but due to the drags in 2Q22E，we now only expect $\sim 15 \%$ sales growth and $17.8 \%$ NP margin（cut from 18．3\％）．Thanks to Li Ning＇s healthy inventory level，we think retail discounts and GP margin could still remain controllable in FY22E，but operating deleverage may be greater than we previously thought．
－Number of stores decreased in 1Q22，but we are not concerned．Li Ning＇s number of stores decreased by 63 to 5，872 in Mar 2022，from 5，935 in Dec 2021. This seems to have deviated from management＇s guidance of 200 net new stores in FY22E，but we are not worried because it is mostly a seasonality issue and it is closing small and opening large，where retail area growth is still intact．
－Maintain BUY and fine－tuned TP to HK\＄75．43．We maintain BUY but fine－ tuned TP to HK\＄75．43，based on an unchanged 35x FY22E P／E．Current valuation is at $28 x$ FY22E P／E，which is not too demanding，in our view，vs 5 year－average of $30 x$ ．We revised down our FY22E／23E／24R NP est．by $7 \% / 7 \% / 7 \%$ to factor in slower sales growth and lower OP margin．
Earnings Summary

| （YE 31 Dec） | FY20A | FY21A | FY22E | FY23E | FY24E |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Revenue（RMB mn） | 14,457 | 22,572 | 26,042 | 30,232 | 33,969 |
| YoY growth（\％） | 4.2 | 56.1 | 15.4 | 16.1 | 12.4 |
| Net income（RMB mn） | 1,698 | 4,011 | 4,633 | 5,408 | 6,290 |
| EPS（RMB） | 0.68 | 1.58 | 1.79 | 2.05 | 2.39 |
| YoY growth（\％） | 12.5 | 133.6 | 13.2 | 14.7 | 16.3 |
| Consensus EPS（RMB） | $\mathrm{n} / \mathrm{a}$ | $\mathrm{n} / \mathrm{a}$ | 1.87 | 2.33 | 2.84 |
| P／E（x） | 73.8 | 31.2 | 27.5 | 24.0 | 20.6 |
| P／B（x） | 14.1 | 9.9 | 7.7 | 6.1 | 5.0 |
| Yield（\％） | 0.4 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| ROE（\％） | 19.5 | 32.9 | 29.7 | 27.5 | 25.8 |
| Net gearing（\％） | Net cash | Net cash | Net cash | Net cash | Net cash |

Source：Company data，Bloomberg，CMBIGM estimates

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Earnings revision
Figure 1：Earnings revision

| RMB mn | FY22E | $\begin{aligned} & \text { New } \\ & \text { FY23E } \end{aligned}$ | FY24E | FY22E | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Old } \\ & \text { FY23E } \end{aligned}$ | FY25E | FY22E | Diff（\％） <br> FY23E | FY24E |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Revenue | 26，042 | 30，232 | 33，969 | 27，269 | 31，639 | 35，533 | －4．5\％ | －4．4\％ | －4．4\％ |
| Gross profit | 13，641 | 15，887 | 17，908 | 14，284 | 16，627 | 18，732 | －4．5\％ | －4．4\％ | －4．4\％ |
| EBIT | 5，759 | 6，675 | 7，520 | 6，195 | 7，172 | 8，068 | －7．0\％ | －6．9\％ | －6．8\％ |
| Net profit att． | 4，633 | 5，408 | 6，290 | 4，977 | 5，807 | 6，744 | －6．9\％ | －6．9\％ | －6．7\％ |
| Diluted EPS（RMB） | 1.79 | 2.05 | 2.39 | 1.92 | 2.20 | 2.56 | －6．9\％ | －6．9\％ | －6．7\％ |
| Gross margin | 52．4\％ | 52．6\％ | 52．7\％ | 52．4\％ | 52．6\％ | 52．7\％ | Oppt | Oppt | Oppt |
| EBIT margin | 22．1\％ | 22．1\％ | 22．1\％ | 22．7\％ | 22．7\％ | 22．7\％ | －0．6ppt | －0．6ppt | －0．6ppt |
| Net profit att．margin | 17．8\％ | 17．9\％ | 18．5\％ | 18．3\％ | 18．4\％ | 19．0\％ | －0．5ppt | －0．5ppt | －0．5ppt |

Source：Company data，CMBIGM estimates
Figure 2：CMBIGM estimates vs consensus

|  |  | CMBIGM |  | Consensus |  |  |  | Diff（\％） |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| RMB mn | FY22E | FY23E | FY24E | FY22E | FY23E | FY24E | FY22E | FY23E |  |
| Revenue | 26,042 | 30,232 | 33,969 | 27,123 | 32,913 | 39,419 | $-4.0 \%$ | $-8.1 \%$ |  |
| Gross profit | 13,641 | 15,887 | 17,908 | 14,199 | 17,487 | 21,066 | $-3.9 \%$ | $-9.1 \%$ |  |
| EBIT | 5,759 | 6,675 | 7,520 | 6,077 | 7,635 | 9,343 | $-5.2 \%$ | $-12.6 \%$ | $-15.0 \%$ |
| Net profit att． | 4,633 | 5,408 | 6,290 | 4,808 | 6,002 | 7,316 | $-3.6 \%$ | $-9.9 \%$ | $-14.0 \%$ |
| Diluted EPS（RMB） | 1.79 | 2.05 | 2.39 | 1.87 | 2.33 | 2.84 | $-4.3 \%$ | $-12.0 \%$ | $-15.9 \%$ |
| Gross margin | $52.4 \%$ | $52.6 \%$ | $52.7 \%$ | $52.3 \%$ | $53.1 \%$ | $53.4 \%$ | $0 p p t$ | $-0.6 p p t$ | $-0.7 p p t$ |
| EBIT margin | $22.1 \%$ | $22.1 \%$ | $22.1 \%$ | $22.4 \%$ | $23.2 \%$ | $23.7 \%$ | $-0.3 p p t$ | -1.1 ppt | $-1.6 p p t$ |
| Net profit att．margin | $17.8 \%$ | $17.9 \%$ | $18.5 \%$ | $17.7 \%$ | $18.2 \%$ | $18.6 \%$ | 0.1 ppt | $-0.3 p p t$ |  |

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## Operating numbers

Figure 3：Historical sales growth trend，by brand


Source：Company data，CMBIGM estimates，＊Nike＇s year end is at May（e．g．4Q18 calendar year＝2Q19 fiscal year＝Sep－Nov 2018）

## Valuation

Figure 4：Peers valuation table


Source：Bloomberg，CMBIGM estimates

## Assumptions

## Figure 5：Major assumptions

| Major assumptions | FY20A | FY21A | FY22E | FY23E | FY24E |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sales by segment（RMB mn） |  |  |  |  |  |
| Shoes | 6，338 | 9，506 | 11，078 | 12，670 | 14，039 |
| Clothes | 7，365 | 11，824 | 13，597 | 16，045 | 18，291 |
| Equipment | 754 | 1，242 | 1，367 | 1，517 | 1，638 |
| Others | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 14，457 | 22，572 | 26，042 | 30，232 | 33，969 |
| Sales by segment growth（\％） |  |  |  |  |  |
| Shoes | 4．2\％ | 50．0\％ | 16．5\％ | 14．4\％ | 10．8\％ |
| Clothes | 3．6\％ | 60．5\％ | 15．0\％ | 18．0\％ | 14．0\％ |
| Equipment | 11．7\％ | 64．9\％ | 10．0\％ | 11．0\％ | 8．0\％ |
| Others | n／a | n／a | n／a | n／a | n／a |
| Total | 4．2\％ | 56．1\％ | 15．4\％ | 16．1\％ | 12．4\％ |
| Sales by channel growth（\％） |  |  |  |  |  |
| Franchises | 0．9\％ | 56．7\％ | 10．0\％ | 14．0\％ | 11．0\％ |
| Self－owned | －9．8\％ | 53．5\％ | 15．0\％ | 17．0\％ | 12．0\％ |
| E－commerce | 29．7\％ | 58．4\％ | 25．0\％ | 19．0\％ | 15．0\％ |
| International | －16．7\％ | 34．9\％ | 10．0\％ | 5．0\％ | 0．0\％ |
| Total | 4．2\％ | 56．1\％ | 15．4\％ | 16．1\％ | 12．4\％ |
| Sales network by segment |  |  |  |  |  |
| Self－owned | 1，149 | 1，165 | 1，190 | 1，210 | 1，230 |
| Franchise | 4，763 | 4，770 | 4，825 | 4，875 | 4，915 |
| Sub－total | 5，912 | 5，935 | 6，015 | 6，085 | 6，145 |
| LN Young | 1，021 | 1，202 | 1，302 | 1，402 | 1，482 |
| Total | 6，933 | 7，137 | 7，317 | 7，487 | 7，627 |
| GP margins | 49．1\％ | 53．0\％ | 52．4\％ | 52．6\％ | 52．7\％ |
| Opex breakdown |  |  |  |  |  |
| A \＆P／sales | 8．9\％ | 7．9\％ | 8．5\％ | 8．7\％ | 8．9\％ |
| Labour／sales | 9．1\％ | 8．0\％ | 8．2\％ | 8．2\％ | 8．0\％ |
| Rental／sales | 6．3\％ | 5．1\％ | 5．2\％ | 5．1\％ | 4．9\％ |
| D \＆A／sales | 4．0\％ | 2．8\％ | 2．7\％ | 2．8\％ | 3．0\％ |
| R \＆D／sales | 2．2\％ | 1．8\％ | 2．1\％ | 2．2\％ | 2．2\％ |
| Provision／sales | 0．0\％ | 0．0\％ | 0．0\％ | 0．0\％ | 0．0\％ |
| Selling \＆distribution costs／sales | 30．6\％ | 27．2\％ | 27．8\％ | 28．0\％ | 28．0\％ |
| Admin expenses／sales | 5．6\％ | 4．9\％ | 4．7\％ | 4．6\％ | 4．6\％ |
| OP margins | 15．2\％ | 22．8\％ | 22．1\％ | 22．1\％ | 22．1\％ |
| Effective tax rate | 24．4\％ | 24．7\％ | 23．0\％ | 22．0\％ | 20．0\％ |
| Net profit margins | 11．7\％ | 17．8\％ | 17．8\％ | 17．9\％ | 18．5\％ |
| Net profit att．growth（\％） | 13．3\％ | 136．1\％ | 15．5\％ | 16．7\％ | 16．3\％ |

Source：Company data，CMBIGM estimates

Financial Summary

| Income statement |  |  |  |  |  | Cash flow summary |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| YE 31 Dec（RMB mn） | FY20A | FY21A | FY22E | FY23E | FY24E | YE 31 Dec（RMB mn） | FY20A | FY21A | FY22E | FY23E | FY24E |
| Revenue | 14，457 | 22，572 | 26，042 | 30，232 | 33，969 | EBIT | 2，196 | 5，136 | 5，759 | 6，675 | 7，520 |
| Franchises | 6，924 | 10，853 | 11，938 | 13，609 | 15，106 | D \＆A | 576 | 630 | 744 | 882 | 1，022 |
| Self－owned | 3，265 | 5，010 | 5，762 | 6，742 | 7，550 | Change in working capital | 142 | 948 | 157 | 368 | 329 |
| E－commerce | 4，049 | 6，413 | 8，016 | 9，539 | 10，970 | Income tax paid | （589） | （549） | $(1,317)$ | $(1,384)$ | $(1,525)$ |
| International | 220 | 296 | 326 | 342 | 342 | Others | 439 |  |  |  |  |
| Cost of goods sold | $(7,363)$ | $(10,603)$ | $(12,401)$ | $(14,345)$ | $(16,061)$ | Net cash from operating | 2，763 | 6，165 | 5，342 | 6，542 | 7，345 |
| Gross profit | 7，094 | 11，969 | 13，641 | 15，887 | 17，908 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other income | 331 | 416 | 599 | 635 | 679 | Capex \＆investments | （594） | $(1,016)$ | $(1,042)$ | $(1,209)$ | $(1,359)$ |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Associated companies | （53） |  |  |  |  |
| Operating expenses | $(5,230)$ | $(7,249)$ | $(8,481)$ | $(9,847)$ | $(11,067)$ | Interest received | 31 | 97 | 95 | 111 | 125 |
| D \＆A | （576） | （630） | （547） | （665） | （747） | Others | （376） | （9） | 26 | （37） | （21） |
| Staff costs | $(1,311)$ | $(1,812)$ | $(2,138)$ | $(2,468)$ | $(2,724)$ | Net cash from investing | （992） | （927） | （920） | $(1,136)$ | $(1,255)$ |
| S \＆D costs（ex－staff，D\＆A） | $(3,449)$ | $(4,783)$ | $(5,636)$ | $(6,588)$ | $(7,433)$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Admin exp．（ex－staff，D\＆A） | 106 | （24） | （161） | （125） | （163） | Equity raised | 189 |  |  |  |  |
| Other operating expenses |  |  |  |  |  | Net change in bank loans |  |  |  |  |  |
| EBIT | 2，196 | 5，136 | 5，759 | 6，675 | 7，520 | Dividend paid | （378） | （510） | $(1,203)$ | $(1,464)$ | $(1,678)$ |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Others | （325） | （112） | （103） | （92） | （72） |
| Finance costs，net | （32） | 33 | 105 | 83 | 148 | Net cash from financing | （513） | （622） | $(1,306)$ | $(1,556)$ | $(1,750)$ |
| JVs \＆associates | 83 | 159 | 156 | 181 | 204 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Exceptional | － |  |  | － |  | Net change in cash | 1，258 | 4，616 | 3，116 | 3，850 | 4，340 |
| Pre－tax profit | 2，248 | 5，328 | 6，020 | 6，939 | 7，872 | Beginning cash balance | 5，961 | 7，187 | 11，803 | 15，419 | 19，639 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Exchange difference | （33） |  |  |  |  |
| Income tax | （549） | $(1,317)$ | $(1,384)$ | $(1,525)$ | $(1,573)$ | Cash at the end of the year | 7，187 | 11，803 | 14，919 | 19，268 | 23，980 |
| Less：Minority interests | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Net profit | 1，698 | 4，011 | 4，636 | 5，414 | 6，299 |  |  |  |  |  |  |


| Balance sheet |  |  |  |  |  | Key ratios |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| YE 31 Dec（RMB mn） | FY20A | FY21A | FY22E | FY23E | FY24E | YE 31 Dec | FY20A | FY21A | FY22E | FY23E | FY24E |
| Non－current assets | 4，817 | 5，419 | 5，955 | 6，559 | 7，207 | Sales mix（\％） |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fixed asset | 1，065 | 1，502 | 1，841 | 2，204 | 2，569 | Franchises | 47.9 | 48.1 | 45.8 | 45.0 | 44.5 |
| Intangible assets \＆goodwill | 357 | 460 | 596 | 767 | 971 | Self－owned | 22.6 | 22.2 | 22.1 | 22.3 | 22.2 |
| Prepaid lease payments | 384 | 384 | 384 | 384 | 384 | E－commerce | 28.0 | 28.4 | 30.8 | 31.6 | 32.3 |
| Interest in joint ventures |  | 62 | 123 | 193 | 273 | International | 1.5 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| Other non－current assets | 3，011 | 3，011 | 3，011 | 3，011 | 3，011 | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Current assets | 9，777 | 15，241 | 19，081 | 23，693 | 28，736 | P\＆L ratios（\％） |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 7，187 | 11，803 | 14，919 | 18，870 | 23，326 | Gross margin | 49.1 | 53.0 | 52.4 | 52.6 | 52.7 |
| Inventories | 1，346 | 1，598 | 2，038 | 2，358 | 2，640 | Operating margin | 15.2 | 22.8 | 22.1 | 22.1 | 22.1 |
| Trade and other receivables | 659 | 928 | 1，070 | 1，242 | 1，396 | Pre－tax margin | 15.5 | 23.6 | 23.1 | 22.9 | 23.1 |
| Prepayments | 584 | 912 | 1，052 | 1，221 | 1，372 | Net margin | 11.7 | 17.8 | 18.3 | 18.4 | 19.0 |
| Other current assets | 1 | ， | 1 | 1 | 1 | Effective tax rate | 25.4 | 25.5 | 23.6 | 22.6 | 20.5 |
| Current liabilities | 5，015 | 7，580 | 8，527 | 9，697 | 10，660 | Balance sheet ratios |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bank loans |  |  |  | － |  | Current ratio（x） | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.2 | 2.4 | 2.7 |
| Trade payables | 1，227 | 1，598 | 1，869 | 2，162 | 2，420 | Quick ratio（x） | 1.7 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 2.2 | 2.4 |
| Accruals \＆other payables | 2，540 | 3，967 | 4，576 | 5，313 | 5，969 | Cash ratio（x） | 1.4 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.2 |
| Tax payables | 592 | 1，360 | 1，426 | 1，568 | 1，615 | Inventory turnover days | 67 | 55 | 60 | 60 | 60 |
| Others | 656 | 656 | 656 | 656 | 656 | Trade receivables days | 17 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Trade payables days | 61 | 55 | 55 | 55 | 55 |
| Non－current liabilities | 889 | 889 | 889 | 889 | 889 | Total debt／total equity ratio（\％） | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Bank loans |  |  |  |  |  | Net debt／equity ratio（\％） | Net cash | Net cash | Net cash | Net cash | Net cash |
| Deferred income | － | － | － | － | － | Returns（\％） |  |  |  |  |  |
| Deferred tax | 64 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 64 | ROE | 19.5 | 32.9 | 29.7 | 27.5 | 25.8 |
| Others | 825 | 825 | 825 | 825 | 825 | ROA | 11.6 | 19.4 | 18.5 | 17.9 | 17.5 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Per share |  |  |  |  |  |
| Minority Interest | － | － | － | － | － | EPS（RMB） | 0.68 | 1.58 | 1.79 | 2.05 | 2.39 |
| Total net assets | 8，689 | 12，191 | 15，620 | 19，665 | 24，393 | DPS（RMB） | 0.21 | 0.49 | 0.55 | 0.64 | 0.74 |
| Shareholders＇equity | 8，689 | 12，191 | 15，620 | 19，665 | 24，393 | BVPS（RMB） | 3.54 | 4.96 | 6.36 | 8.01 | 9.93 |

Source：Company data，CMBIGM estimates

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## Disclosures \＆Disclaimers

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HOLD
SELL
NOT RATED
OUTPERFORM
MARKET－PERFORM
UNDERPERFORM
：Stock with potential return of over $15 \%$ over next 12 months
：Stock with potential return of $+15 \%$ to $-10 \%$ over next 12 months
Stock with potential loss of over $10 \%$ over next 12 months
：Stock is not rated by CMBIGM
：Industry expected to outperform the relevant broad market benchmark over next 12 months
Industry expected to perform in－line with the relevant broad market benchmark over next 12 months
：Industry expected to underperform the relevant broad market benchmark over next 12 months

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