

Thursday, 10 October 2024 | update

Sygnity: sell (reiterated)

SGN.PW; SGN.WA | IT, Poland

Valuation Too High Despite New Gov't Contracts

Sygnity's stock has dropped 9.4% since our last update in April, slightly underperforming the broad market WIG index, down 5.9% since April.

Meanwhile, Sygnity reported strong financial results for Q2 2024, disclosing that, in the first half of the year, its two latest acquisitions, Edrana and Sagra, contributed approx. PLN 14.5m to total revenues. As a result, the pace of organic growth in H1 2024 amounted to a creditable 12%, an improvement on the revenue growth rates of a few quarters earlier.

Sygnity did report a decline in public sector orders in 1H 2024, but, more recently, the Company has secured contracts from the Polish Post Office and the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture (ARMA) that can be expected to bring back revenue growth in future quarters.

We have slightly updated our earnings forecasts for Sygnity to reflect Q2'24 results, and we have also revised the valuation model to reflect current RFR, a reduced equity risk premium, and updated peer multiples. It is worth noting Sygnity's healthy balance sheet position, reflected in a Net Cash/EBITDA ratio of 1.0x as of end-June'24. With this, we believe the Company has the means to pursue further acquisitions in line with the ambitions expressed by the Management Board.

We set our new target price for Sygnity at PLN 39.00, implying downside risk of 33% and leading us to reiterate our sell rating. SGN stock is currently trading at 16.9x EV/EBITDA'25E and 27.4x P/E'25E, still showing very large premiums to the peer group.

Good 2024 H1 Results

Sygnity generated revenue of PLN 131.4m in H1 2024, an increase of 26.0% on the same period a year ago. The number of projects in each of the key business segments continued to decline during the first six months of 2024 as Sygnity aims to phase out projects that generate inadequate profits.

The gross profit margin in 6M'24 amounted to 33.2% after a small Y/Y increase of 3.3 p.p. EBITDA for the six months ended 30 June 2024 came in at PLN 25.1m vs. PLN 17.7m the year before, marking a big improvement owed partly to the recent acquisitions.

New Government Contracts

Sales to the public sector accounted for most of Sygnity's revenue in H1 2024 at PLN 45.1m, an amount 7% lower than in the same period in 2023.

On the upside, the Company has recently secured new contracts from the public sector buyers. One is a contract from the Polish Post Office worth up to PLN 23.5m, and another is an HR and payroll systems maintenance and development deal between Sygnity Business Solutions and the Agency for the Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture. The gross fee during the initial contract term amounts to PLN 16.9m, and, if the term is extended, the fee can increase to a maximum of PLN 29.8m.

(PLN m)	2022 adj.*	2023 adj.*	2024E	2025E	2026E
Revenue	219.1	229.3	288.9	319.3	344.3
EBITDA	41.5	49.0	62.3	71.5	78.6
EBITDA margin	19.0%	21.4%	21.6%	22.4%	22.8%
EBIT	31.1	39.2	46.8	56.2	63.1
Net profit	31.6	39.3	38.6	48.2	53.6
P/E	41.8	33.6	34.2	27.4	24.6
P/CE	31.4	26.9	24.4	20.8	19.1
P/B	7.3	6.0	5.1	4.3	3.6
EV/EBITDA	30.9	25.3	20.1	16.9	14.6
DPS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DYield	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

*calendar years

Current Price*	PLN 58.00
Target Price	PLN 39.00
mCap	PLN 1.3bn
ADTV (3M)	PLN 0.3m

*Price as of 9 October 2024, 5:00 PM

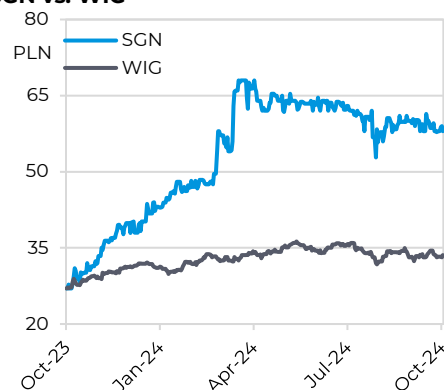
Shareholders

TSS Europe B.V.	72.68%
Blacksheep Fund Management Ltd.	6.67%
Barca Global Master Fund LP	9.01%
Others	11.64%

About Sygnity

Sygnity creates IT solutions and offers advisory services to customers across many different industries. The Company generates approximately PLN 280m in annual sales. Headquartered in Warsaw, Sygnity earns more than 95% its revenues in Poland.

SGN vs. WIG



Company	Target Price		Recommendation	
	new	old	new	old
Sygnity	39.00	35.80	sell	sell

Company	Current Price	Target Price	Downside
Sygnity	58.00	39.00	-32.8%

Forecast Update	2024E	2025E	2026E
	Revenue	+1.5%	+1.5%
EBITDA	+2.3%	+3.7%	+3.1%
Net profit	-8.6%	-0.9%	-0.9%

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Key Risks

Mergers & Acquisitions

Growth through acquisitions represents one of the three main pillars of Sygnity's current strategy plan. There is a substantial amount of risk involved in business acquisitions, both at the stage of carrying out the transaction and in terms of achievable synergy.

At the moment, Sygnity is aiming to acquire between three and five software companies per year – a high number that seems an unrealistic goal in terms of the number of transactions achievable in the IT industry, indicating heightened risk of failure.

No Dividends

Sygnity as part of its business strategy plans to use free cash flow to pay for acquisitions. As such, in our view this strategy could lead to curbed medium-term dividend payments despite fairly good cash flow generation.

Dependence on Third-Party Solutions

Sygnity serves as a local partner to global technology companies, integrating their solutions into customer systems and providing a range of services from training to maintenance, upgrades, and extensions. If global software providers were to change the terms of their partner policies, for example by limiting the number of local partners, or by bringing implementation services in different markets in house, this could have a negative effect on revenues.

Increase in Labor Costs

Payroll accounts for a major part of Sygnity's operating expenses. According to an assessment by the recruitment agency Grafton, confirmed by Sygnity itself, 2024 is a year when companies are revisiting their staffing needs as regards IT professionals. There is less demand for programmers and more demand for AI, machine learning, cloud, Big Data, and cybersecurity skills. Salary growth in tech has slowed to its lowest pace in five years, and IT professionals seem to be placing more value on job stability and permanent employment contracts.

That being said, IT salaries are still very much trending upwards, and businesses with slow sales growth are struggling to remain profitable.

Public Contracts

Sygnity competes in government tenders for IT services which are typically awarded to the lowest bidder. Meanwhile, the biggest contracts usually require the onboarding of subcontractors, which heightens the risk of nonperformance.

Another risk are cost overruns on underestimated projects (Sygnity's 2013 e-Taxes contract is one example of an underrated budget).

Long-Term Contracts

The valuation and successful delivery of a long-term contract hinges on many factors, some of which are beyond the control of the supplier. For example, the actual figures at the end of the contract might miss the initial revenue, cost, and profit targets, leading to provisions, adjustments, and write-offs (cost overruns are the most common issue), and, in the worst case, to events of default.

Exchange Rate Risk

Sygnity's revenues and costs are affected by movements in the Polish zloty's exchange rates relative to the euro and the US dollar. On the balance sheet, assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies consist exclusively of trade receivables and trade payables.

Corruption Probe

In 2019, Sygnity became involved in an investigation into allegations of corruption in the award of contracts by the Polish Post Office brought against its employees, including the CEO and the Supervisory Board Chairman. The Company fully cooperated with the authorities and turned over all requested records and items.

Since we do not have insight into the current status of the case, we cannot tell whether or not it might affect the Company's business in the future.

Valuation

Using DCF analysis and relative valuation, we set our 12-month per-share price target for Sygnity at PLN 39.00.

Relative Valuation

We compared Sygnity with a group of comparable companies based on their forward P/E and EV/EBITDA multiples.

Each of the forecast years, calendar 2024, 2025, and 2026, is assigned an equal weight. Forecasts for Sygnity use expected 2024, 2025 and 2026 earnings, respectively. The 2024E valuation multiples use pro-forma financial data.

Relative Valuation

	P/E			EV/EBITDA		
	2024E	2025E	2026E	2024E	2025E	2026E
Sap	29.8	21.8	18.7	45.1	32.7	27.7
Oracle	21.4	18.9	16.4	31.2	27.9	24.5
Cap Gemini	10.2	9.6	8.9	15.5	14.7	13.5
Sage Group	18.7	16.8	14.9	27.6	24.6	21.7
Atos	7.9	6.1	4.8	-	-	0.4
Indra Sistemas	6.0	5.5	5.0	11.0	9.8	8.6
Computacenter	7.0	6.5	6.2	14.1	12.8	12.0
Asseco Poland	4.8	4.5	4.4	15.5	13.3	11.8
Asseco South Eastern Europe	7.9	7.3	7.0	12.9	12.0	11.3
Asseco Business Solutions	10.7	9.6	8.8	17.0	15.3	13.8
maximum	29.8	21.8	18.7	45.1	32.7	27.7
minimum	4.8	4.5	4.4	11.0	9.8	0.4
median	9.1	8.5	7.9	15.5	14.7	12.7
Sygnity	19.8*	16.9	14.6	33.3*	27.4	24.6
premium / discount	127.7%	111.9%	97.6%	99.8%	87.7%	95.0%
Implied Valuation						
Value per share (PLN)	27.47	30.36	33.30	29.53	31.43	30.25
Multiple weight		50%			50%	
Year weight	33%	33%	33%	33%	33%	33%
Equity value per share (PLN)	30.40					

Source: mBank, *based on proforma figures

Valuation Summary

(PLN)	Weight	Price
Relative Valuation	50%	30.40
DCF Analysis	50%	42.49
	Price	36.45
	12M Target Price	39.00

Source: mBank

We have removed Comarch from the peer group due to a takeover tender offer by CVC, and we replaced it with two new companies: Asseco South Eastern Europe and Asseco Business Solutions.

DCF Valuation

DCF model assumptions:

- The forecast period spans the years 2024-2033.
- The perpetuity risk-free rate is 4.5%.
- We have reduced the equity risk premium from 6.0% to 5.0% for all the companies in our coverage universe.
- We assume FCF after the forecast period will grow at a rate of 2.0%.
- Net debt is on an IFRS 16 basis as of December 2023, adjusted for payments for two acquisitions completed by Sygnity.
- Terminal period D&A expenses are equal to CAPEX.

DCF Model

(PLN m)	2024E	2025E	2026E	2027E	2028E	2029E	2030E	2031E	2032E	2033E	2033+
Revenue	295.7	319.3	344.3	368.2	393.3	419.5	446.9	475.5	504.5	535.3	
YoY change	10.3%	8.0%	7.8%	6.9%	6.8%	6.7%	6.5%	6.4%	6.1%	6.1%	
EBIT	48.0	56.2	63.1	69.2	75.8	83.2	91.2	99.5	108.0	117.3	
EBIT margin	16.2%	17.6%	18.3%	18.8%	19.3%	19.8%	20.4%	20.9%	21.4%	21.9%	
Tax on EBIT	7.8	9.6	11.1	12.5	14.0	15.4	16.9	18.4	20.0	21.7	
Effective tax rate	16.2%	17.1%	17.6%	18.0%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	
NOPLAT	40.2	46.6	52.0	56.7	61.8	67.8	74.3	81.1	88.0	95.6	
D&A	15.1	15.3	15.5	15.7	15.9	16.1	16.3	16.5	16.7	17.0	
CAPEX	-12.9	-13.3	-13.7	-14.1	-14.6	-15.0	-15.5	-16.0	-16.5	-17.0	
Working capital & other	-0.2	-0.7	-1.0	-0.4	0.4	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	
FCF	42.3	47.8	52.8	57.8	63.4	69.7	75.9	82.5	89.2	96.6	98.5
WACC	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	
Discount factor	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	
PV FCF	41.3	42.5	42.7	42.4	42.1	42.1	41.6	40.9	40.0	39.1	
WACC	9.3%	10.1%	9.9%	10.1%	10.5%	9.9%	10.4%	10.5%	10.5%	10.8%	9.5%
Cost of debt	5.3%	6.1%	5.9%	6.1%	6.5%	5.9%	6.4%	6.5%	6.5%	6.8%	5.5%
Risk-free rate	4.3%	5.1%	4.9%	5.1%	5.5%	4.9%	5.4%	5.5%	5.5%	5.8%	4.5%
Risk premium	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Effective tax rate	16.2%	17.1%	17.6%	18.0%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	19.0%
Net debt / EV	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cost of equity	9.3%	10.1%	9.9%	10.1%	10.5%	9.9%	10.4%	10.5%	10.5%	10.8%	9.5%
Risk premium	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Beta	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

FCF growth after the forecast period	2.0%
Terminal value	1313.4
Present value of terminal value	531.3
Present value of FCF in the forecast period	414.6
Goodwill (EV)	945.9
Net debt (adj. 2023 eop)	-21.2
Other noncore assets	0.0
Minority interest	0.0
Equity value	967.1
Shares outst. (millions)	22.8
Equity value per share (PLN)	42.5
12-month cost of equity	7.0%
Target price (PLN)	45.5
EV/EBITDA ('25) at target price	13.2
P/E('25) at target price	20.1
TV / EV	56.6%

Source: mBank

Sensitivity Analysis

	FCF growth in perpetuity				
	1.0%	1.5%	2.0%	2.5%	3.0%
RFR terminal period +1.0 p.p.	40.0	41.2	42.5	44.0	45.7
RFR terminal period 0.5 p.p.	41.1	42.4	43.9	45.6	47.5
RFR terminal period (g =4.5%)	42.3	43.8	45.5	47.4	49.6
RFR terminal period -0.5 p.p.	43.7	45.3	47.3	49.5	52.0
RFR terminal period -1.0 p.p.	45.2	47.1	49.3	51.9	54.9

P&L						Cash Flow					
(PLN m)	2022 Adj.	2023 Adj.	2024E	2025E	2026E	(PLN m)	2022 Adj.	2023 Adj.	2024E	2025E	2026E
Revenue	219.1	229.3	288.9	319.3	344.3	Operating CF	55.1	54.8	57.4	64.7	70.1
YoY % change	6.4%	4.7%	26.0%	10.5%	7.8%	Working capital	18.1	0.2	-0.2	-0.7	-1.0
EBIT	31.1	39.2	46.8	56.2	63.1	Investing CF	-8.2	-3.8	-58.9	-5.4	-5.9
Margin	14.2%	17.1%	16.2%	17.6%	18.3%	CAPEX	-8.2	-3.8	-5.0	-5.4	-5.9
D&A	10.5	9.9	15.5	15.3	15.5	Financing CF	-26.4	-20.5	-12.4	-9.8	-9.8
EBITDA	41.5	49.0	62.3	71.5	78.6	Change in debt	-18.0	-9.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Financing activity	-1.9	0.6	-0.7	1.9	1.9	CF	20.4	30.6	-13.8	49.4	54.4
Pre-tax profit	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	OCF/EBITDA	132.6%	111.8%	92.1%	90.5%	89.2%
Margin	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	FCFF	39.0	45.3	44.6	51.4	56.4
Tax	2.5	-0.4	-7.5	-10.0	-11.4	FCFF/EV	3.0%	3.7%	3.6%	4.3%	4.9%
Discontinued ops.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	FCFE	38.4	42.2	40.0	49.4	54.4
Net profit	31.6	39.3	38.6	48.2	53.6	FCFE/MCAP	2.9%	3.2%	3.0%	3.7%	4.1%
						ROIC	17.4%	22.2%	22.5%	23.4%	26.4%
						ROCE growth	15.0%	17.6%	18.2%	18.7%	17.9%
						DPS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
						Divid. payout ratio	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
						Dividend yield	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Balance Sheet						Key Ratios					
(PLN m)	2022 Adj.	2023 Adj.	2024E	2025E	2026E		2022 Adj.	2023 Adj.	2024E	2025E	2026E
Fixed assets	186.6	179.2	230.8	228.8	227.0	P/E	41.8	33.6	34.2	27.4	24.6
Goodwill	157.2	157.2	157.2	157.2	157.2	P/CE	31.4	26.9	24.4	20.8	19.1
Current assets	114.1	147.0	137.3	190.9	249.8	EV/EBITDA	30.9	25.3	20.1	16.9	14.6
Inventory	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	EV/EBIT	41.3	31.7	26.8	21.5	18.2
Accounts receivable	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	P/S	6.0	5.8	4.6	4.1	3.8
Cash	72.4	102.9	89.0	138.5	192.9	P/BV	7.3	6.0	5.1	4.3	3.6
Equity	179.9	220.6	260.2	308.4	362.0	P/FCFE	34.3	31.3	33.0	26.7	24.3
Minority interest	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	EBITDA margin	19.0%	19.0%	21.4%	22.2%	23.2%
Noncurrent liab.	27.3	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	YoY % EBITDA change	-8.1%	18.0%	27.1%	14.7%	10.0%
Loans	0.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	Net margin	14.4%	17.1%	13.4%	15.1%	15.6%
Bonds	18.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	YoY net change	19.2%	24.3%	-1.7%	24.7%	11.3%
Current liabilities	93.6	88.9	91.3	94.7	98.2	Price (PLN)	58.0	58.0	58.0	58.0	58.0
Loans	0.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	Shares outst. (millions)	22.8	22.8	22.8	22.8	22.8
Bonds	18.7	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	MCap	1,320.0	1,320.0	1,320.0	1,320.0	1,320.0
Trade and other payables	36.6	38.3	40.6	44.0	47.6	EV	1,284.5	1,241.2	1,255.1	1,205.6	1,151.2
Net debt	-35.5	-78.8	-64.9	-114.4	-168.8						
Net debt/EBITDA	-0.9	-1.6	-1.0	-1.6	-2.1						

Source: mBank

List of abbreviations and ratios used by mBank:

EV (Enterprise Value) – Equity Value + Net Debt; **EBIT** – Earnings Before Interest and Taxes; **EBITDA** – EBIT + Depreciation & Amortisation; **Net Debt** – Borrowings + Debt Securities + Interest-Bearing Loans - Cash and Cash Equivalents; **P/E** (Price/Earnings) – Price Per Share Divided by Earnings Per Share; **P/CE** (Price to Cash Earnings) – Price Per Share Divided by Earnings + Depreciation & Amortisation; **P/B** (Price to Book Value) – Price Per Share Divided by Book Value Per Share; **P/CF** (Price to Cash Flow) – Price Divided by Cash Flow from Operations; **ROE** (Return on Equity) – Earnings Divided by Shareholders' Equity; **ROCE** (Return on Capital Employed) – EBIT x (Average Assets - Current Liabilities); **ROIC** (Return on Invested Capital) – EBIT x (1-Tax Rate) / (Average Equity + Minority Interest + Net Debt); **FCFF** (Free Cash Flow to Firm) – Cash Flow from Operations - CAPEX - Lease Payments; **FCFE** (Free Cash Flow to Equity) – Free Cash Flow to Firm - Net Interest Expense (incl. Debt + Leases)
EBITDA margin – EBITDA/Sales

OVERWEIGHT (OW) – a rating which indicates that we expect a stock to outperform the broad market

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mBank issued the following recommendations for Sygnty in the 12 months prior to publication:
Sygnty (Pawel Szpigiel)

recommendation	sell
date issued	2024-04-15
target price (PLN)	35.80
price on rating day	64.00

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