November 30, 2021 11:49 PM GMT

## UPDATE

### Waterdrop Inc. | Asia Pacific

# 3Q21 - Flat Sales; Profitability Starts to Improve

Industry ViewIn-Line

Price Target
US\$5.00

WDH saw flat FYP and a 10% YoY decline in 3Q revenue, in line with our expectations. Net losses were still significant at Rmb477mn, but started to narrow QoQ as the company shifted its focus from quantity to quality.

**3Q FYP flat; revenue down 10%.** In line with previous guidance, WDH's insurance sales slowed substantially in 3Q due to tightened regulations for online marketing, with flat first year premiums (FYP) and a 10% YoY decline in revenue. In the first 9 months, FYP was up 37.5% YoY, substantially outperforming the life industry. The take rate (16.8% in 3Q) was 1.8ppts lower YoY but it had started to stabilise QoQ. Despite operational challenges, the company was able to add 2.3mn paying customers in the quarter (total now at 27.2mn). Costs in 3Q were still increasing, up 32% YoY (sales & marketing, up 30%; G&A, up 9% and R&D, up 93%), leading to lower net margin (a negative 61%) and a higher net loss of Rmb477mn. Cash balance (incl. short-term investment) was Rmb2.6bn, down 19% QoQ mainly due to operating losses. The company repurchased approximately 492,000 ADS shares in the quarter but the spending was immaterial at US\$1.4mn, vs an announced quota of a maximum US\$50mn.

**4Q guidance - flat revenue; costs to come down.** The company will keep its strategy to focus on customer experience enhancement and continue to decrease its reliance on external traffic. This could still mean somewhat flattish revenue growth in 4Q, but likely a better margin on a sequential basis helped by continued management efforts in cost optimisation.

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## **Asia Research**

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#### Waterdrop Inc. (WDH.N, WDH US)

Hong Kong/China Insurance / China

Stock Rating Industry View	Overweight In-Line
Price target	US\$5.00
Up/downside to price target (%)	233
Shr price, close (Nov 30, 2021)	US\$1.50
52-Week Range	US\$11.76-1.34
Sh out, dil, curr (mn)	394
Mkt cap, curr (bn)	US\$0.591
Avg daily trading value (mn)	US\$1

Fiscal Year Ending	12/20	12/21e	12/22e	12/23e
ModelWare EPS (Rmb)	(0.24)	(0.31)	0.06	0.18
ModelWare net inc (Rmb mn)	(284)	(930)	242	698
Revenue, net (Rmb mn)	3,028	4,236	5,795	7,811
P/sales	-	0.9	0.7	0.5
P/E	NM	NM	156.3	54.1

Unless otherwise noted, all metrics are based on Morgan Stanley ModelWare framework

e = Morgan Stanley Research estimates

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# Valuation Methodology and Risks

#### Waterdrop Inc. (WDH.N)

Base case, derived from a target 2021 P/Sales multiple of 6x. Our target multiple is in between that of insurtech firms (3x; 100% premium to reflect Waterdrop's higher growth potential (56% revenue CAGR, 2021-23, vs. 20% on average for insurtech names)) and healthcare platforms (11x; 45% discount as it will likely take some time for the company to transform itself into a healthcare platform).

#### Risks to Upside

- Fast growth of China's insurance intermediary market
- Surge in channel productivity and conversion efficiency
- Fast growth of China's online healthcare market

#### Risks to Downside

- Third-party channel traffic becomes very expensive
- Tighter regulations on online insurance intermediaries
- Growth in China's online healthcare market slows



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(as of November 30, 2021)

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	COVERAGE UN	NIVERSE	INVESTMEN	T BANKING CLIE	ENTS (IBC)	OTHER MA INVESTMENT : CLIENTS (	SERVICES
STOCK RATING	COUNT	% OF	COUNT	% OF	% OF	COUNT	% OF
CATEGORY		TOTAL		TOTAL IBC	RATING		TOTAL
				(	CATEGORY		OTHER
							MISC
Overweight/Buy	1508	42%	391	45%	26%	679	43%
Equal-weight/Hold	1532	43%	407	46%	27%	675	43%
Not-Rated/Hold	0	0%	0	0%	0%	0	0%
Underweight/Sell	526	15%	79	9%	15%	209	13%
TOTAL	3,566		877			1563	

Data include common stock and ADRs currently assigned ratings. Investment Banking Clients are companies from whom Morgan Stanley received investment banking compensation in the last 12 months. Due to rounding off of decimals, the percentages provided in the "% of total" column may not add up to exactly 100 percent.

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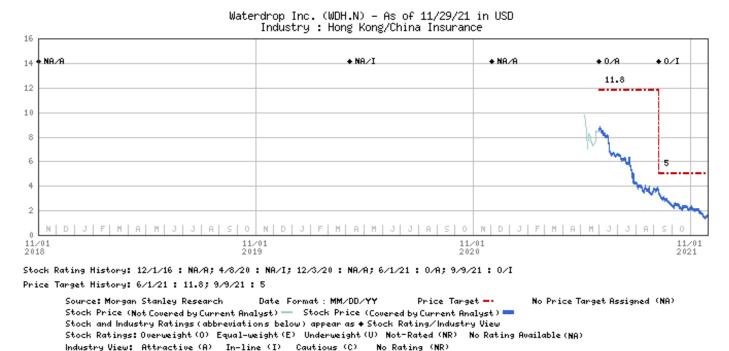
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