



Risk Factors and Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

The information on this website and in our webcasts includes forward-looking statements about our plans and future performance, including those under Outlook. These statements use such words as “may,” “will,” “expect,” “believe” and “plan.” They reflect our expectations and speak only as of the date of this report. We do not undertake to update them. Our expectations (or the underlying assumptions) may change or not be realized, and you should not rely unduly on forward-looking statements.

Our business and execution of our strategic plan, the Plan to Win, are subject to risks. The most important of these is whether we can remain relevant to our customers and a brand they trust. Meeting customer expectations is complicated by the risks inherent in our global operating environment. The IEO segment of the restaurant industry, although largely mature in our major markets, is highly fragmented and competitive. The IEO segment has been contracting in many markets, including some major markets, due to unfavorable economic conditions, and this may continue. Persistently high unemployment rates in many markets have also increased consumer focus on value and heightened pricing sensitivity. Combined with increasing pressure on commodity and labor costs, these circumstances affect restaurant sales and margin growth despite the strength of our brand and value proposition. We have the added challenge of the cultural, economic and regulatory differences that exist within and among the more than 100 countries where we operate. Initiatives we undertake may not have universal appeal among different segments of our customer base and can drive unanticipated changes in guest counts and customer perceptions. Our operations, plans and results are also affected by regulatory and similar initiatives around the world, notably the focus on nutritional content and the production, processing and preparation of food “from field to front counter,” as well as industry marketing practices.

These risks can have an impact both in the near- and long-term and are reflected in the following considerations and factors that we believe are most likely to affect our performance.

Our ability to remain a relevant and trusted brand and to increase sales and profits depends largely on how well we execute the Plan to Win.

The Plan to Win addresses the key drivers of our business and results—people, products, place, price and promotion. The quality of our execution depends mainly on the following:

- Our ability to anticipate and respond effectively to trends or other factors that affect the IEO segment and our competitive position in the diverse markets we serve, such as spending patterns, demographic changes, trends in food preparation, consumer preferences and publicity about us, all of which can drive popular perceptions of our business or affect the willingness of other companies to enter into site, supply or other arrangements or alliances with us;
- The risks associated with our franchise business model, including whether our franchisees and developmental licensees will have the experience and financial resources to be effective operators and remain aligned with us on operating, promotional and capital-intensive initiatives and the potential impact on us if they experience food safety or other operational problems or project a brand image inconsistent with our values, particularly if our contractual and other rights and remedies are limited by local law or otherwise, costly to exercise or subject to litigation;
- Our ability to drive restaurant improvements that achieve optimal capacity, particularly during peak mealtime hours, and to motivate our restaurant personnel and our franchisees to

achieve consistency and high service levels so as to improve consumer perceptions of our ability to meet expectations for quality food served in clean and friendly environments;

- Whether our restaurant reimagining and rebuilding plans, which remain a priority, are targeted at the elements of the restaurant experience that will best accomplish our goals and whether we can complete our plans as and when projected;
- The success of our initiatives to support menu choice, physical activity and nutritional awareness and to address these and other matters of social responsibility in a way that communicates our values effectively and inspires trust and confidence;
- Our ability to respond effectively to adverse perceptions about the quick-service category of the IEO segment or about our products, promotions and premiums, such as Happy Meals (collectively, our products), or the reliability of our supply chain and the safety of our products, and our ability to manage the potential impact on McDonald's of food-borne illnesses or product safety issues;
- The success of our plans to improve existing menu items and to roll out new menu items, as well as the impact of our competitors' actions, including in response to our menu changes and product introductions, and our ability to continue robust menu development and manage the complexity of our restaurant operations;
- Our ability to differentiate the McDonald's experience in a way that balances consumer value with margin expansion, particularly in markets where pricing or cost pressures are significant or have been exacerbated by the current challenging economic and operating environment;
- The impact of pricing, marketing and promotional plans on sales and margins and our ability to adjust these plans to respond quickly to changing economic conditions;
- The impact of events such as boycotts or protests, labor strikes and supply chain interruptions (including due to lack of supply or price increases) that can adversely affect us directly or adversely affect the vendors, franchisees and others that are also part of the McDonald's System and whose performance has a material impact on our results;
- Our ability to recruit and retain qualified local personnel to manage our operations and growth, particularly in certain developing markets;
- Our ability to leverage promotional or operating successes in individual markets into other markets in a timely and cost-effective way; and
- The costs and operational risks associated with our increasing reliance on information technology (including our point-of-sale and other in-store technology systems or platforms), such as the need for increasing investments to upgrade and maintain our systems, the potential for system failures or programming errors and the impact on our margins from the use of cashless payments.

Our results and financial condition are affected by global and local market conditions, which can adversely affect our sales, margins and net income.

Our results of operations are substantially affected not only by global economic conditions, but also by local operating and economic conditions, which can vary substantially by market. Unfavorable conditions can depress sales in a given market or daypart (e.g., breakfast). To mitigate the impact of these conditions, we may take promotional or other actions that adversely affect our margins, limit our operating flexibility or result in charges or restaurant closings. Some macroeconomic conditions have an even more wide-ranging and prolonged impact. The current environment has been characterized by weak economies, persistently high unemployment rates, inflationary pressures and extreme volatility in financial markets worldwide, which has been exacerbated by the significant uncertainty associated with

the ongoing sovereign debt crisis in certain Euro zone countries. This environment has adversely affected both business and consumer confidence and spending, and uncertainty about the long-term investment environment could further depress capital investment and economic activity. These unfavorable conditions are expected to persist for the foreseeable future in many of our most important markets. The key factors that can affect our operations, plans and results in this environment are the following:

- Whether our strategies will permit us to compete effectively and make continued market share gains despite the uncertain economic outlook and extreme market volatility, while at the same time achieving sales and operating income within our targeted long-term average annual range of growth;
- The effectiveness of our supply chain management to assure reliable and sufficient product supply on favorable terms;
- The impact on consumer disposable income levels and spending habits of governmental actions to manage national economic matters, whether through austerity or stimulus measures and initiatives intended to control wages, unemployment, credit availability, inflation, taxation and other economic drivers;
- The impact on restaurant sales and margins of recent volatility in commodity and gasoline prices, which we expect will continue, and the impact of pricing, hedging and other actions that we, franchisees and suppliers may take to address this environment;
- The impact on our margins of labor costs given our labor-intensive business model, the long-term trend toward higher wages in both mature and developing markets and any potential impact of union organizing efforts;
- The impact of foreign exchange and interest rates on our financial condition and results;
- Whether we are able to identify and develop restaurant sites consistent with our plans for net growth of Systemwide restaurants from year to year, and whether new sites are as profitable as expected;
- The challenges and uncertainties associated with operating in developing markets, which may entail a relatively higher risk of political instability, economic volatility, crime, corruption and social and ethnic unrest, all of which are exacerbated in many cases by a lack of an independent and experienced judiciary and uncertainties in how local law is applied and enforced, including in areas most relevant to commercial transactions and foreign investment;
- The nature and timing of decisions about underperforming markets or assets, including decisions that result in impairment charges that reduce our earnings; and
- The impact of changes in our debt levels on our credit ratings, interest expense, availability of acceptable counterparties, ability to obtain funding on favorable terms or our operating or financial flexibility, especially if lenders impose new operating or financial covenants.

Increasing legal and regulatory complexity will continue to affect our operations and results in material ways.

Our legal and regulatory environment worldwide exposes us to complex compliance, litigation and similar risks that affect our operations and results in material ways. In many of our markets, including the United States and Europe, we are subject to increasing regulation, which has increased our cost of doing business. In developing markets, we face the risks associated with new and untested laws and judicial systems. Among the more important regulatory and litigation risks we face and must manage are the following:

- The cost, compliance and other risks associated with the often conflicting and highly prescriptive regulations we face, especially in the United States where inconsistent standards

imposed by local, state and federal authorities can adversely affect popular perceptions of our business and increase our exposure to litigation or governmental investigations or proceedings;

- The impact of new, potential or changing regulation that can affect our business plans, such as those relating to marketing and the content and safety of our food and other products, as well as the risks and costs of our labeling and other disclosure practices, particularly given varying legal requirements and practices for testing and disclosure within our industry, ordinary variations in food preparation among our own restaurants, and the need to rely on the accuracy and completeness of information from third-party suppliers;
- The impact of nutritional, health and other scientific inquiries and conclusions, which constantly evolve and often have contradictory implications, but nonetheless drive popular opinion, litigation and regulation, including taxation, in ways that could be material to our business;
- The risks and costs to us, our franchisees and our supply chain of increased focus by U.S. and overseas governmental authorities and non-governmental organizations on environmental matters, such as environmental sustainability, climate change, greenhouse gases and water consumption, including initiatives that effectively impose a tax on carbon emissions;
- The impact of litigation trends, particularly in our major markets, including class actions, labor and employment claims, landlord/tenant disputes and intellectual property claims; the relative level of our defense costs, which vary from period to period depending on the number, nature and procedural status of pending proceedings; and the cost and other effects of settlements or judgments, which may require us to make disclosures or take other actions that may affect perceptions of our brand and products;
- Adverse results of pending or future litigation, including litigation challenging the composition of our products, or the appropriateness or accuracy of our marketing or other communication practices;
- The increasing costs and other effects of compliance with U.S. and overseas regulations affecting our workforce and labor practices, including regulations relating to wage and hour practices, immigration, healthcare, retirement and other employee benefits and unlawful workplace discrimination;
- Disruptions in our operations or price volatility in a market that can result from governmental actions, such as price, foreign exchange or import-export controls, increased tariffs or government-mandated closure of our or our vendors' operations, and the cost and disruption of responding to governmental investigations or proceedings, whether or not they have merit;
- The legal and compliance risks associated with information technology, such as the costs of compliance with privacy, consumer protection and other laws, the potential costs associated with alleged security breaches (including the loss of consumer confidence that may result and the risk of criminal penalties or civil liability to consumers or employees whose data is alleged to have been collected or used inappropriately) and potential challenges to the associated intellectual property rights or to our use of that intellectual property;
- The impact of changes in financial reporting requirements, accounting principles or practices, including with respect to our critical accounting estimates, changes in tax accounting or tax laws (or related authoritative interpretations), particularly if corporate tax reform becomes a key component of budgetary initiatives in the United States and elsewhere, and the impact of settlements of pending or any future adjustments proposed by the IRS or other taxing authorities in connection with our tax audits, all of which will depend on their timing, nature and scope.

The trading volatility and price of our common stock may be affected by many factors.

Many factors affect the volatility and price of our common stock in addition to our operating results and prospects. The most important of these, some of which are outside our control, are the following:

- The continuing unfavorable global economic and extremely volatile market conditions;
- Governmental action or inaction in light of key indicators of economic activity or events that can significantly influence financial markets, particularly in the United States which is the principal trading market for our common stock, and media reports and commentary about economic or other matters, even when the matter in question does not directly relate to our business;
- Changes in financial or tax reporting and accounting principles or practices that materially affect our reported financial condition and results and investor perceptions of our performance;
- Trading activity in our common stock or trading activity in derivative instruments with respect to our common stock or debt securities, which can reflect market commentary (including commentary that may be unreliable or incomplete in some cases) or expectations about our business, our creditworthiness or investor confidence generally; actions by shareholders and others seeking to influence our business strategies; portfolio transactions in our stock by significant shareholders; or trading activity that results from the ordinary course rebalancing of stock indices in which McDonald's may be included, such as the S&P 500 Index and the Dow Jones Industrial Average;
- The impact of our stock repurchase program or dividend rate; and
- The impact on our results of other corporate actions, such as those we may take from time to time as part of our continuous review of our corporate structure in light of business, legal and tax considerations.

Our results and prospects can be adversely affected by events such as severe weather conditions, natural disasters, hostilities and social unrest, among others.

Severe weather conditions, natural disasters, hostilities and social unrest, terrorist activities, health epidemics or pandemics (or expectations about them) can adversely affect consumer spending and confidence levels or other factors that affect our results and prospects, such as commodity costs. Our receipt of proceeds under any insurance we maintain with respect to certain of these risks may be delayed or the proceeds may be insufficient to offset our losses fully.