Software - Germany

### Buy (old: Buy)

EUR 32.00 (old: EUR 32.00)

### No surprises at USU - continuing to grow profitably

Yesterday, USU released a strong set of Q1 results, which slightly exceeded our estimates on the topline.

**Q1** sales increased by 12.6% yoy to  $\in$  33.3m (eNuW: 32.8m), driven by strong international sales as well as a continuously high number of new and follow-up orders, which further increased the record order backlog to  $\in$  89m (+17% yoy). Looking at the sales split, **SaaS revenues again rose disproportionately to \in 4.0m (+21.5% yoy), fully in line with our estimate. Thanks to the ongoing digitization trend and several project wins, consulting revenues also had a significant impact, growing a considerable 22.7% to \in 21.5m.** 

**Q1 EBITDA grew by 10.2% yoy to € 3.8m** (eNuW: € 3.8m), implying a stable margin of 11.7% after the first quarter. The flat margin development is based on the increasing share of SaaS revenues (lower initial sales), a higher use of freelancers considering the strong order intake as well as a slightly increased marketing ratio (+0.5pp). On the other hand, increased personnel costs in light of wage inflation have been entirely offset by price increases.

On the back of this, **management confirmed the FY '23e guidance** of  $\in$  134-139m sales (eNuW:  $\in$  138.5m) and an EBITDA of  $\in$  16.5-18.0m (eNuW:  $\in$  17.6m), implying a margin of 12.6% at mid-point. This is absolutely reasonably, in our view, considering the record order backlog as well as the fact that Q1 is usually the weakest quarter.

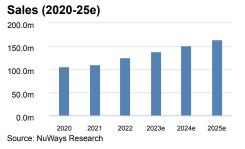
Overall, the **investment case remains fully intact**, as USU is shifting its business model towards a SaaS dominated business model, while at the same time winning further significant projects. Moreover with the introduction of the "One USU" strategy, management is aiming for further efficiency gains going forward. In fact, USU merged all its German entities to create a leaner operational structure, which should significantly benefit SG&A as well as personnel costs going forward. The total costs of the program are estimated at  $\in 0.5m$  (eNuW).

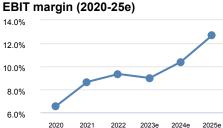
Despite the recent strong share price performance, valuation continues to look undemanding, as the stock is trading at 22.7x PE '24e, a clear discount to the 2-year forward-looking average of 25.1x.

We hence reiterate BUY with an unchanged PT of € 32.00 based on DCF.

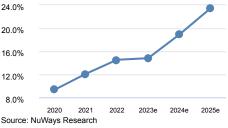
Y/E 31.12 (EUR m)	2020	2021	2022	2023e	2024e	2025e
Sales	107.3	111.9	126.5	138.5	151.4	165.0
Sales growth	12.2%	4.3%	13.1%	9.5%	9.3%	9.0%
EBITDA	13.4	14.4	16.8	17.6	21.4	27.1
Net debt (if net cash=0)	-1.3	-7.5	0.6	0.9	-2.1	-8.5
FCF	15.3	12.5	9.1	5.4	8.9	12.2
Net Debt/EBITDA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
EPS pro forma	0.72	0.68	0.76	0.89	1.10	1.45
EBITDA margin	12.5%	12.9%	13.3%	12.7%	14.1%	16.4%
ROCE	9.3%	12.1%	14.5%	14.8%	18.9%	23.5%
EV/sales	1.9	2.4	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.5
EV/EBITDA	15.0	18.8	15.6	14.9	12.2	9.4
PER	34.3	36.3	32.6	27.7	22.5	17.1
Adjusted FCF yield	4.4%	3.4%	3.8%	4.4%	5.4%	7.1%

Source: Company data, NuWays, Close price as of 25.05.2023





### ROCE (2020-25e)



#### **Company description**

USU Software is a leading provider of software and service solutions for IT and customer service management. The company offers solutions and services around the globe to companies in order for them to become more agile, cut costs, etc.

Source: NuWays Research

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High/low 52 weeks (€)	25.70 / 15.85
3m rel. performance	21.7%
6m rel. performance	30.4%
12m rel. performance	26.5%

Market data	
Share price (in €)	24.80
Market cap (in € m)	261.0
Number of shares (in m pcs)	10.5
Enterprice value (in € m)	263.0
Ø trading volume (6 months)	5,292

	Identifier
Bloomberg	OSP2 GR
Reuters	OSPGk
WKN	A0BVU2
ISIN	DE000A0BVU28

Key shareholders	
AUSUM GmbH (Udo Strehl)	51.3%
MainFirst SICAV	4.7%
Peter Scheufler	4.7%
USU board (excl. Udo Strehl)	2.5%
Shares held in treasury	5.0%
Free Float	31.8%

	Estimates	changes	;
	<u>2023e</u>	2024e	<u>2025e</u>
Sales	0%	0%	0%
EBIT	0%	0%	0%
FPS	0%	0%	0%

Comment on changes

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- Sales: € 134-139m
- EBITDA: € 16.5-18.0m
- SaaS revenues: ≥ +25%



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## Financials

Profit and loss (EUR m)	2020	2021	2022	2023e	2024e	2025e
Sales	107.3	111.9	126.5	138.5	151.4	165.0
Sales growth	12.2%	4.3%	13.1%	9.5%	9.3%	9.0%
Cost of sales	50.8	55.7	63.3	69.3	75.4	80.0
Gross profit	56.5	56.2	63.2	69.3	76.0	85.0
Sales and marketing	20.4	20.5	22.6	25.6	28.0	30.5
General and administration	14.3	10.2	11.7	12.7	12.9	13.2
Research and development	15.4	16.7	18.1	19.7	20.7	21.8
Other operating income	1.3	1.5	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.6
Other operating expenses	0.7	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2
Total operating expenses	49.5	46.5	51.4	56.8	60.3	64.1
Unusual or infrequent items	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EBITDA	13.4	14.4	16.8	17.6	21.4	27.1
Depreciation	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
EBITA	12.0	13.2	15.7	16.5	20.3	26.0
Amortisation of goodwill	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Amortisation of intangible assets	5.0	3.5	3.9	4.1	4.6	5.1
Impairment charges	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EBIT (inc revaluation net)	7.0	9.7	11.8	12.4	15.7	20.9
Interest income	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Interest expenses	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Investment income	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Financial result	-0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Recurring pretax income from continuing operations	6.8	9.7	11.9	12.5	15.8	21.0
Extraordinary income/loss	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Earnings before taxes	6.8	9.7	11.9	12.5	15.8	21.0
Income tax expense	1.3	3.0	4.4	3.6	4.7	6.3
Net income from continuing operations	5.5	6.8	7.5	8.9	11.1	14.7
Income from discontinued operations (net of tax)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net income	5.5	6.8	7.5	8.9	11.1	14.7
Minority interest	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net profit (reported)	5.5	6.8	7.5	8.9	11.1	14.7
Average number of shares	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
EPS reported	0.52	0.64	0.71	0.84	1.05	1.40

Profit and loss (common size)	2020	2021	2022	2023e	2024e	2025e
Sales	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cost of sales	47.3%	49.8%	50.0%	50.0%	49.8%	48.5%
Gross profit	52.7%	50.2%	50.0%	50.0%	50.2%	51.5%
Sales and marketing	19.0%	18.4%	17.9%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%
General and administration	13.3%	9.2%	9.3%	9.2%	8.5%	8.0%
Research and development	14.4%	14.9%	14.3%	14.2%	13.7%	13.2%
Other operating income	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%
Other operating expenses	0.6%	0.5%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
Total operating expenses	46.1%	41.6%	40.6%	41.0%	39.8%	38.8%
EBITDA	12.5%	12.9%	13.3%	12.7%	14.1%	16.4%
Depreciation	1.3%	1.1%	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%
EBITA	11.2%	11.8%	12.4%	11.9%	13.4%	15.8%
Amortisation of goodwill	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Amortisation of intangible assets	4.6%	3.1%	3.1%	2.9%	3.0%	3.1%
Impairment charges	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
EBIT (inc revaluation net)	6.5%	8.6%	9.3%	9.0%	10.4%	12.7%
Interest income	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Interest expenses	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Investment income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Financial result	neg.	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Recurring pretax income from continuing operations	6.3%	8.7%	9.4%	9.0%	10.4%	12.7%
Extraordinary income/loss	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Earnings before taxes	6.3%	8.7%	9.4%	9.0%	10.4%	12.7%
Income tax expense	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Net income from continuing operations	5.1%	6.0%	5.9%	6.4%	7.3%	8.9%
Net income	5.1%	6.0%	5.9%	6.4%	7.3%	8.9%
Minority interest	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Net profit (reported)	5.1%	6.0%	5.9%	6.4%	7.3%	8.9%

Source: Company data, NuWays

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Balance sheet (EUR m)	2020	2021	2022	2023e	2024e	2025e
Intangible assets	44.0	43.4	42.7	39.3	35.3	30.8
Property, plant and equipment	19.7	19.7	18.7	23.6	27.6	32.0
Financial assets	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
FIXED ASSETS	64.6	63.9	62.2	63.6	63.6	63.6
Inventories	5.0	5.3	6.5	7.1	7.8	8.5
Accounts receivable	16.9	14.9	22.3	24.4	26.6	29.0
Other assets and short-term financial assets	1.3	1.0	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6
Liquid assets	18.5	24.3	15.5	15.2	18.3	24.6
Deferred taxes	7.0	4.9	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4
Deferred charges and prepaid expenses	2.2	1.8	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
CURRENT ASSETS	50.8	52.2	50.8	53.2	59.1	68.6
TOTAL ASSETS	115.5	116.0	113.0	116.8	122.8	132.3
SHAREHOLDERS EQUITY	61.8	64.4	57.0	60.1	65.3	74.2
MINORITY INTEREST	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Provisions for pensions and similar obligations	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1
Other provisions and accrued liabilities	3.1	2.9	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
Short-term liabilities to banks	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Accounts payable	4.2	4.5	7.0	7.7	8.3	8.8
Advance payments received on orders	5.1	3.2	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9
Other liabilities (incl. from lease and rental contracts)	9.5	10.0	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1
Deferred taxes	1.3	0.9	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
Deferred income	11.6	11.3	11.9	11.9	11.9	11.9
CURRENT LIABILITIES	18.8	17.7	21.0	21.7	22.3	22.9
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS EQUITY	115.5	116.0	113.0	116.8	122.8	132.3
Palance aboot (common circ)	2020	2021	2022	2023e	2024e	2025e
Balance sheet (common size) Intangible assets	2020 38.1%	37.4%	2022 37.8%	33.6%	20246	20256
-	38.1% 17.1%	37.4% 17.0%	37.8% 16.6%	33.6% 20.2%	20.7% 22.5%	23.3% 24.2%
Property, plant and equipment Financial assets	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	20.2%	0.6%	0.6%
FIXED ASSETS	56.0%	55.0%	55.1%	<b>54.5%</b>	51.8%	<b>48.1%</b>
Inventories	4.3%	<b>55.0%</b> 4.6%	<b>55.1%</b> 5.7%	<b>54.5%</b> 6.1%	6.3%	<b>40.1%</b>
Accounts receivable	4.3%	4.0%	19.7%	20.9%	21.7%	22.0%
	14.0%	0.8%	19.7%	20.9%	1.3%	1.2%
Other assets and short-term financial assets	16.1%	20.9%	13.7%	13.0%	14.9%	18.6%
Liquid assets Deferred taxes	6.0%	4.2%	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	1.8%
Deferred charges and prepaid expenses	1.9%	4.2 <i>%</i> 1.6%	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	1.8%
CURRENT ASSETS	44.0%	45.0%	<b>44.9%</b>	45.5%	48.2%	<b>51.9%</b>
TOTAL ASSETS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	45.5%	100.0%	100.0%
		0/				
SHAREHOLDERS EQUITY	53.5%	55.5%	50.4%	51.4%	53.2%	56.1%
MINORITY INTEREST	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Provisions for pensions and similar obligations	1.1%	1.2%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Other provisions and accrued liabilities	2.7%	2.5%	3.3%	3.2%	3.0%	2.8%
Short-term liabilities to banks	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Accounts payable	3.6%	3.8%	6.2%	6.6%	6.8%	6.7%
Advance payments received on orders	4.4%	2.7%	3.5%	3.4%	3.2%	3.0%
Other liabilities (incl. from lease and rental contracts)	8.3%	8.7%	8.9%	8.6%	8.2%	7.6%
Deferred taxes	1.2%	0.8%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%
Deferred income	10.0%	9.7%	10.6%	10.2%	9.7%	9.0%
	16.3%	15.2%	18.6%	18.6%	18.2%	17.3%
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS EQUITY	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Company data, NuWays

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Cash flow statement (EUR m)	2020	2021	2022	2023e	2024e	2025e
Net profit/loss	5.5	6.8	7.5	8.9	11.1	14.7
Depreciation of fixed assets (incl. leases)	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Amortisation of goodwill & intangible assets	5.0	3.5	3.9	4.1	4.6	5.1
Others	-11.4	-2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cash flow from operating activities	14.6	11.0	7.9	9.5	11.7	15.3
Increase/decrease in inventory	-1.1	-0.4	-1.2	-0.6	-0.7	-0.7
Increase/decrease in accounts receivable	4.0	2.0	-7.4 2.5	-2.1 0.7	-2.3	-2.4
Increase/decrease in accounts payable	-0.6 0.0	0.3	2.5 0.0	0.7	0.7 0.0	0.5 0.0
Increase/decrease in other working capital positions	2.3	0.0 1.9	-6.0	-2.1	-2.2	-2.6
Increase/decrease in working capital Cash flow from operating activities	2.3 17.7	13.3	-6.0 <b>10.4</b>	-2.1 12.1	-2.2	-2.0 18.4
CAPEX	2.4	0.9	1.3	6.6	5.7	6.2
Payments for acquisitions	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Financial investments	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Income from asset disposals	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cash flow from investing activities	-2.4	-0.8	-1.3	-6.6	-5.7	-6.2
Cash flow before financing	11.1	8.3	3.8	-0.4	3.1	6.4
Increase/decrease in debt position	8.6	-0.4	-2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Purchase of own shares	0.0	0.0	9.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Capital measures	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dividends paid	4.2	4.2	5.3	5.8	5.8	5.8
Others	-11.4	-2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Effects of exchange rate changes on cash	-0.1	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cash flow from financing activities	-7.0	-7.0	-18.0	-5.8	-5.8	-5.8
Increase/decrease in liquid assets	8.1	5.8	-8.8	-0.4	3.1	6.4
Liquid assets at end of period	18.5	24.3	15.5	15.2	18.3	24.6
Key refice (FUD m)	2020	2024	2022	20220	20246	20250
Key ratios (EUR m) P&L growth analysis	2020	2021	2022	2023e	2024e	2025e
Sales growth	12.2%	4.3%	13.1%	9.5%	9.3%	9.0%
EBITDA growth	143.0%	45.1%	25.9%	22.5%	27.0%	53.7%
EBIT growth	159.4%	138.4%	68.1%	28.7%	33.1%	68.2%
EPS growth	470.7%	28.2%	36.6%	31.5%	47.6%	65.5%
Efficiency						
Sales per employee	153.0	149.9	159.9	165.6	171.7	178.1
EBITDA per employee	19.1	19.3	21.3	21.1	24.3	29.3
No. employees (average)	702	746	792	836	882	926
Balance sheet analysis						
Avg. working capital / sales	12.9%	12.3%	12.0%	11.7%	13.2%	13.5%
Inventory turnover (sales/inventory)	21.7	21.0	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5
Accounts receivable turnover	57.5	48.6	64.3	64.3	64.3	64.3
Accounts payable turnover	30.0	29.2	40.3	40.3	40.3	40.3
Cash flow analysis						
Free cash flow	15.3	12.5	9.1	5.4	8.9	12.2
Free cash flow/sales	14.2%	11.2%	7.2%	3.9%	5.9%	7.4%
FCF / net profit	278.8%	184.8%	121.0%	61.1%	80.2%	82.8%
Capex / sales	2.3%	0.8%	1.0%	4.8%	3.8%	3.8%
Solvency						
Net debt	-1.3	-7.5	0.6	0.9	-2.1	-8.5
Net Debt/EBITDA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Dividend payout ratio	76.8%	77.9%	77.3%	65.1%	52.4%	39.4%
Interest paid / avg. debt	3.0%	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%
Returns	0.001	10.10	=		10.001	
ROCE	9.3%	12.1%	14.5%	14.8%	18.9%	23.5%
ROE	8.9%	10.5%	13.2%	14.8%	16.9%	19.8%
Adjusted FCF yield	4.4%	3.4%	3.8%	4.4%	5.4%	7.1%
	1.6%	2.0%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%
Dividend yield		0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
DPS	0.4		<u> </u>	~ ~ ·		
DPS EPS reported	0.52	0.64	0.71	0.84	1.05	
DPS EPS reported Average number of shares			0.71 10.5	0.84 10.5	1.05 10.5	
DPS EPS reported Average number of shares Valuation ratios	0.52 10.5	0.64 10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
DPS EPS reported Average number of shares Valuation ratios P/BV	0.52 10.5 4.2	0.64 10.5 4.0	10.5 4.6	10.5 4.3	10.5 4.0	10.5 3.5
DPS EPS reported Average number of shares Valuation ratios P/BV EV/sales	0.52 10.5 4.2 1.9	0.64 10.5 4.0 2.4	10.5 4.6 2.1	10.5 4.3 1.9	10.5 4.0 1.7	10.5 3.5 1.5
DPS EPS reported Average number of shares Valuation ratios P/BV	0.52 10.5 4.2	0.64 10.5 4.0	10.5 4.6	10.5 4.3	10.5 4.0	1.40 10.5 3.5 1.5 9.4 12.1

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### Disclosures

Disclosures regarding research publications of NuWays AG pursuant to section 85 of the German Securities Trading Act (WpHG)

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Company	Disclosures
USU Software AG	2

Historical target price and rating changes for USU Software AG						
Company	Date	Analyst	Rating	Target Price	Close	
USU Software AG	05.12.2022	Sennewald, Philipp	Buy	EUR 29.00	EUR 19.50	

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The adj. FCF method is based on the assumption that investors purchase assets only at a price (enterprise value) at which the operating cash flow return after taxes on this investment exceeds their opportunity costs in the form of a hurdle rate of 7.5%. The operating cash flow is calculated as EBITDA less maintenance capex and taxes.



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According to Article 4(1) No. i of the delegated regulation 2016/958 supplementing regulation 596/2014 of the European Parliament, further information regarding investment recommendations of the last 12 months are published under:

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