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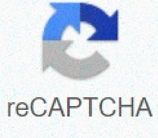

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Is robinhood penny stocks

At the height of the pandemic, amid stay-at-home orders, retail investors flooded onto the zero-commission Robinhood stock trading platform. Since then, so-called Robinhood stocks have become something of a pejorative among experienced investors. After all, the conventional wisdom is that retail investors tend to enter a market at the top. The dot-com bubble of the late 1990s, which burst in early 2000, is best perhaps the best example. Of course, that's not what happened in 2020. In this case, the retail investors were right. Robinhood's trading activity picked up noticeably in March, when stocks plunged as institutions and hedge funds fled the market. Individual investors, by and large, bought at the bottom. Thousands made huge profits in names like Tesla (NASDAQ:TSLA) and Amazon (NASDAQ:AMZN). As David Kass, a clinical professor of finance at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business, explained in an email to InvestorPlace, "Robinhood has introduced trading in stocks, ETFs, and options to a new generation of young investors in their 20's and 30's by providing these services without charging any commissions or fees. As a result of offering investors the opportunity to invest in fractional shares with as little as $1, the world of investing in equities has been democratized such that virtually everyone can participate." As markets have normalized, however, some widely owned Robinhood stocks, as compiled by the excellent website Robintrack.net, look questionable. Multiple biotechs have soared on minimal news related to a novel coronavirus vaccine or treatment, only to collapse almost as quickly. Stocks near or even in bankruptcy, like Chesapeake Energy (NYSE:CHK) and J.C. Penney (OTCMKTS:JCPNQ) saw huge, unsustainable rallies. So while Robinhood investors timed the market well, they also have owned, and still own, a few duds. Here are nine of those Robinhood stocks. All are in the top 100 stocks on the platform, per Robintrack data. And all probably shouldn't be: Hertz (NYSE:HTZ) Aurora Cannabis (NYSE:ACB) GoPro (NASDAQ:GPRO) Genius Brands (NASDAQ:GNUS) United States Oil Fund (NYSEARCA:USO) iBio (NYSEMKT:IBIO) AMC Entertainment (NYSE:AMC) American Airlines (NASDAQ:AAL) General Electric (NYSE:GE) Robinhood Stocks to Avoid: Hertz (HTZ) Source: aureliefrance / Shutterstock.com Hertz helped give Robinhood stocks their reputation. As InvestorPlace Markets Analyst Thomas Yeung noted on this site, 11,000 Robinhood investors bought shares the day after the company declared bankruptcy in May. At one point, Hertz was in Chapter 11 and still had a market capitalization over $700 million. The gains have faded since, but HTZ stock remains one of the biggest Robinhood stocks. According to Robintrack data, HTZ still is the 57th-most-owned stock on the Robinhood platform. It's ahead of popular stocks like DraftKings (NASDAQ:DKNG) and General Motors (NYSE:GM), among many others. And the stock still has a market capitalization of almost $200 million. HTZ in fact has rallied 166% following an 80% plunge when bankruptcy was declared. After those gains, the current valuation simply doesn't make much sense. The only way the common stock will have any value at all is if the value of Hertz's assets clears its debt. That seems highly unlikely, barring a massive and sustained increase in used car values. With the bankruptcy itself likely to cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and ongoing losses amid a collapse in demand, the math simply doesn't work. It's long since past time to move on from Hertz stock. Aurora Cannabis (ACB) Robinhood investors, perhaps unsurprisingly, are fond of cannabis stocks. Many of the most widely owned names come from the sector. That optimism admittedly makes some sense. Cannabis stocks aren't necessarily cheap, given many aren't yet profitable. But they're certainly cheaper than they have been. Meanwhile, the industry retains some long-term potential. It's abundantly clear at this point that Canadian operators, in particular, are dealing with oversupply. Even Canopy Growth (NYSE:CGC) CEO David Klein has admitted that there are "no logical buyers" for production facilities. But cannabis producers are responding, which should at some point lead to pricing stabilization and, hopefully, positive earnings and free cash flow. So the issue isn't necessarily the optimism toward the sector. It's the top two choices: Aurora and Hexo (NYSE:HEXO). Both companies have significant balance sheet problems. In even a best-case scenario, both will be playing defense for years to come. Meanwhile, the likes of Canopy and Cronos (NASDAQ:CRON) sit with substantial cash — and thus plenty of flexibility to respond to market challenges going forward. It seems like Robinhood investors, to at least some degree, have focused on the low share prices of ACB (before its reverse split) and HEXO. That's a mistake. Those shares prices are low for a reason. Even cannabis bulls should be looking elsewhere. Robinhood Stocks to Avoid: GoPro (GPRO) Source: Larry George II / Shutterstock.com There are worse stocks on this list than GoPro, at least in my opinion. GoPro is the leader in the action camera category. Valuation, at least based on revenue — and expected profits next year — is reasonable at worst. That said, it is hard to see much of a reason to get excited about GPRO stock. The action camera category is stagnant. Profitability has been inconsistent. It's possible GoPro at some point becomes an acquisition target, but bulls have been making that case for years now. Robinhood investors see GPRO stock very differently, however. The stock is the 10th-most owned on the platform, with nearly half a million shareholders. It's ahead of AMZN, Boeing (NYSE:BA) and many other companies with market values 100x higher. That kind of optimism seems like too much. GPRO has been dead money for years now, and that may continue for quite a while. Genius Brands (GNUS) Source: patat / Shutterstock.com Starting on May 5, GNUS stock rose almost 25-fold in less than a month. Robinhood buying appears to have been a key catalyst. Ownership went from roughly 5,000 in early May to nearly 200,000 by mid-June. The problem was that there wasn't a lot of reason for the rally — or the buying. Bulls — aided by a fair amount of promotion by the company — saw Genius Brands as potentially a Netflix (NASDAQ:NFLX) alternative for kids. But as InvestorPlace Markets Analyst Luke Lango argued this month, that case seems far too optimistic. And so it's no surprise that GNUS has given back a good chunk of its gains. The problem is that shares still are up over 400% from their early May levels. The company's Kartoon Channel hardly seems like enough to support that kind of move, even with Genius Brands taking advantage of the rally to improve its balance sheet. It seems likely that at some point, even the remaining die-hard fans will exit, leaving GNUS back where it started. Robinhood Stocks to Avoid: United States Oil Fund (USO) The United States Oil Fund truly highlights the diverging perspectives surrounding Robinhood stocks. On one hand, the huge increase in ownership of USO seems questionable, to say the least. USO is supposed to track crude spot prices. But the problem is that the fund has to use futures to do so. Over time, rolling over those futures has steadily eroded the value of the fund. As InvestorPlace's Todd Shriber noted in late May, the fund through March 31 had posted an annualized loss of 18%. And so the roughly 150,000 investors who own USO don't seem to understand the entire story. In fact, many flooded into the fund in April, when USO had to execute a 1-for-8 reverse split after oil futures briefly went negative. Instead of learning from the fund's troubles — and a noted change in its structure — Robinhood investors went in full-bore. But those investors, whether they understand the fund or not, have been right. USO is up over 60% since the reverse split. Once again, the investors being scorned for their lack of knowledge are handily outperforming those who supposedly know better. iBio (IBIO) As far as coronavirus plays go, the same dynamics seems to hold. Robinhood investors were early to some of 2020's best stocks, including Moderna (NASDAQ:MRNA) and Inovio (NASDAQ:INO). But, as I wrote about INO stock this month, on the whole, individual investors seem to be pricing in too much success into too many names. And we've seen some questionable biotech stocks post huge rallies on little news beyond a press release or two. From here, iBio looks like one of those questionable biotechs. iBio took advantage of the Ebola pandemic to raise capital — and hopes — surrounding its pipeline. Nothing came of that optimism, and by last year the company had a market capitalization under $10 million. It's not guaranteed that history repeats itself. But with so many firms — among them the world's greatest biotech and pharma companies — trying to develop a vaccine, it seems far too risky that iBio will be the winner this time. Robinhood Stocks to Avoid: AMC Entertainment (AMC) Source: Helen89 / Shutterstock.com Movie theater operator AMC Entertainment seems like a perfect play on the return to normalcy. Shares are down 43% so far this year, but once a coronavirus vaccine or treatment arrives, demand should rebound in a hurry. Robinhood investors certainly are buying the case. AMC is the 54th-most owned stock on the entire platform, despite a market capitalization under $500 million. There's one big problem with the case, however: AMC stock isn't cheap. Yes, it's down 43% so far this year. But considering losses this year, and debt raised to fund those losses, AMC including debt actually is nearly as expensive as it was at the start of the year. Meanwhile, in part because of that debt, the stock looked like a value trap even before the coronavirus began to spread. With bankruptcy a very real risk, AMC seems like one of the Robinhood stocks that the platform has gotten wrong. American Airlines (AAL) Source: GagliardiPhotography / Shutterstock.com AMC isn't the only play on normalcy among Robinhood stocks. American Airlines is a major holding, with over 650,000 users. That's the third-highest figure on the entire platform. But as I detailed earlier this week, AAL stock isn't the right play, even for airline bulls. Like AMC, American has a troubling amount of debt. In fact, it almost certainly has the worst balance sheet of the four major U.S. airlines. Management is a concern as well, even in the context of an industry that badly erred in preparing for the next crisis. There is a better option in terms of playing an airline rebound, which admittedly is one of the more-owned Robinhood stocks: Southwest Airlines (NYSE:LUV). A better balance sheet and better management seems to make LUV a better choice, even if Robinhood investors disagree. Robinhood Stocks to Avoid: General Electric (GE) As far as cheap stocks go, General Electric probably isn't a terrible choice. New CEO Larry Culp is trying to right the ship. Asset sales have helped the balance sheet. GE at $30-plus a few years back was a clearly dangerous name, even at the time. Under $7, it's not the worst gamble in the market. Still, the risks here remain significant. And there are reasons why GE stock hasn't been able to match the optimism that greeted Culp's hire in October 2018. Boeing's problems are a factor. The pandemic hasn't helped, either. The broader issue, however, remains the same: GE is not what it was. GE Healthcare is an excellent business, but Power is a mess, Aviation is struggling, and there's not much left after a series of divestitures. From a distance, GE stock looks worth the gamble. Looking closer, the case gets much more cloudy. Yet GE stock, somewhat incredibly, is the second-most owned of all Robinhood stocks. Only Ford (NYSE:F), another once-great company struggling to execute a turnaround, is more popular. In both cases, however, Robinhood investors seem to be looking backward, instead of forward. After spending time at a retail brokerage, Vince Martin has covered the financial industry for close to a decade for InvestorPlace.com and other outlets. He has no positions in any securities mentioned. Penny stocks have the allure of huge returns. Hey, if the shares are trading at, say, 50 cents, it doesn't take much to get to $1 or $2, right? Well, not necessarily so. For the most part, it is usually challenging to make money in this corner of the market. First of all, a company will have a difficult time getting much coverage from Wall Street analysts and institutions. Next, penny stocks usually have major problems with their businesses. In some cases, there may even be the likelihood of bankruptcy, which can wipe out the equity. And even if a company has enough financial resources to stay afloat, there could still be the issue of the market opportunity. It may be more of a niche, which limits the upside. But, even with all these problems, there are still opportunities to make money with penny stocks. So then, which ones look interesting right now? Here's a look at seven: Boxlight (NASDAQ:BOXL) Verb Technology (NASDAQ:VERB) Hexo (NYSE:HEXO) Synacor (NASDAQ:SYNC) Support.com (NASDAQ:SPRT) Castlight Health (NYSE:CSLT) Cinedigm (NASDAQ:CIDM) Penny Stocks: Boxlight (BOXL) Source: Pavel Kapysh / Shutterstock.com Boxlight is a developer of technology solutions for interactive learning. Some of its products include panels, projectors and peripherals. But there is also a set of offerings for the fast-growing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) category, such as for robots, coding systems, 3D printing and portable science labs. The company does have a large distribution footprint. Boxlight products are sold across 60 countries and are in over one million classrooms. There is also a strong reseller ecosystem of more than 500 partners. The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly put pressure on the business. But Boxlight has been able to effectively navigate through this. For example, management was able to obtain an investment of $22 million from The Lind Partners and pull off a $34.5 million secondary offering. Another positive for BOXL stock is that the company recently struck a strategic acquisition for Sahara Presentation Systems. The company, which also develops interactive classroom products, has a strong presence in the EMEA (Europe, Middle-East and Africa) regions and should provide a new source of growth. Verb Technology (VERB) Verb Technology operates a Cloud platform that helps customers leverage video, such as with sales enablement. Some of the applications are for webinars, onboardings and ecommerce. The software is sold in more than 60 countries and is available in 48 languages. The customers range from small businesses to large enterprises. With the Covid-19 pandemic, the corporate world has been scrambling to better use video. True, this has not necessarily helped VERB stock. But the company is still in the early stages. And there is certainly lots of growth potential. Just look at the latest earnings report. The SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) revenues jumped by 55% on a year-over-year basis and 16% sequentially. In fact, Verb has been able to post six consecutive quarters of growth on the top line. To help keep up the momentum, the company has been investing in integrations. One such integration is with Salesforce.com (NYSE:CRM), which includes a joint marketing campaign, and another one will launch soon with Microsoft's (NASDAQ:MSFT) Outlook. Hexo (HEXO) HEXO is a manufacturer of packaged cannabis goods. The company is one of the largest licensed operators in the Canadian market and has about two million square feet of space in Ontario and Quebec. HEXO stock has rallied during the past month. And the main reason is President-elect Joe Biden's win in the U.S. election. Wall Street believes that he will be more favorable to the cannabis industry. But it's important to keep in mind that HEXO stock is still well off its 52-week high of $2.24. The shares are now trading at penny-stock levels of $1. Now, while the U.S. market holds potential for HEXO, the immediate focus is on the Canadian segment. The good news is that the supply-and-demand situation is starting to improve. In the latest quarter, HEXO reported a 76% year-over-year spike in revenues to $27.1 million. There was also a 21% sequential improvement for adjusted EBITDA. One key for the company has been the focus on creating compelling beverages. Then again, HEXO has the benefit of a top-notch partner in this effort, Molson Coors (NYSE:TAP). Synacor (SYNC) Synacor is an enterprise software Cloud company that provides email, collaboration, identity management and managed services. Its customers are primarily in industries like communications, media and government. The Covid-19 pandemic did negatively impact the business. But it appears that Synacor is in a much better position now. Keep in mind that the company has reinstated its financial guidance. For the fourth quarter, it expects to post double-digit enterprise Cloud growth and positive cash flow. The gem appears to be the company's Cloud ID system. It's similar to what Okta's (NASDAQ:OKTA) Identity Cloud is offering, which has seen tremendous growth. However, OKTA also has a market capitalization of $33 billion. As for SYNC, it is a mere $59 million. Support.com (SPRT) Source: fizkes/ShutterStock.com Founded more than 20 years ago, Support.com is a provider of outsourced call center and technical support solutions. The company's platform includes a variety of technology capabilities to streamline the process as well. The market is certainly large, especially for providing technical support for devices. Just some of the areas for help include installation, maintenance, troubleshooting, inter-operability and learning new features. Consumers also have come to expect support on a 24/7 basis, whether via phone, desktop or mobile. The market is also competitive, though. And yes, SPRT has been a long-term penny stock. Yet the company has been making major changes, which could help turn things around. A big part of the strategy is to move from consumer-focused to enterprise-focused services. The margins are much higher for this model, and there is a growing need for higher-end capabilities. The valuation on SPRT is definitely attractive. The market cap is just shy of $40 million, but there is also $29.7 million in the bank. Castlight Health (CSLT) In 2016, Castlight Health pulled off a high-profile initial public offering (IPO). On the debut, the shares soared by 149%. But unfortunately, this would be the high point. CSLT stock has since been trending down — and is now among the penny stocks, with its price at $1.27. Yet investors should not necessarily throw in the towel on this one. Castlight Health operates a platform that connects health vendors, benefits resources and plan designs. The technology provides a personalized experience for users. To help boost growth, Castlight Health has been investing aggressively in virtual care. A key piece of this strategy has been the formation of a partnership with Amwell (NYSE:AMWL), which has a leading telehealth solution. Next, the company has focused on its service for behavioral health. This is an underserved — but critical — area of health. And finally, the company has been able to increase its customer satisfaction levels. This is no easy feat when it comes to healthcare benefits. Since January, the NPS (Net Promoter Score) — which measures if a customer will recommend a product — has jumped an impressive 25 points. As for CSLT stock, it is cheap. Note that the price-to-sales ratio is 1.32. The balance sheet is also solid. The cash balance is $44 million and the debt load is $19 million. Cinedigm (CIDM) Source: Pavel Kapysh / Shutterstock.com Cinedigm packages feature films and series for digital platforms such as Apple (NASDAQ:AAPL), Netflix (NASDAQ:NFLX), Amazon (NASDAQ:AMZN) and Comcast (NASDAQ: CMCSA). Over the years, the company has also built its own technology for content and delivery. While the market is red hot, CIDM stock has not been. The price is only at 87 cents, and the market cap is just under $117 million. But despite this, CIDM could still be an interesting speculation. One reason is the company's majority owner, Bison Capital. The firm is based in Hong Kong and has extensive experience in the entertainment industry. Consider that there are plans to tap into the fast-growing Chinese market. Next, Cinedigm has been reporting strong momentum in usage. Last year, the platform had over 4.5 million monthly users. Now the number is over 15.2 million, making this one of the most promising of the penny stocks on this list. On the date of publication, Tom Taulli did not have (either directly or indirectly) any positions in any of the securities mentioned in this article except ownership of Cinedigm. Tom Taulli (@ttaulli) is the author of various books on investing and technology, including Artificial Intelligence Basics, High-Profit IPO Strategies and All About Short Selling. He is also the founder of WebIPO, which was one of the first platforms for public offerings during the 1990s.

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