

Estimate change 

TP change 

Rating change 

CMP: INR750

TP: INR850 (+13%)

Neutral

Upbeat performance

But Hi-tech concerns persist; reiterate Neutral

■ ZENT reported a decent 3QFY25, with revenue growth of 0.7% QoQ CC (est. flat growth), driven by Manufacturing & Consumer services (up 6.5% QoQ CC) and Healthcare & Lifesciences (up 3.2% QoQ CC). Deal TCV came in at USD205.3m (up 1.7% QoQ/22.6% YoY). EBIT margin expanded 70bp QoQ to 13.8%, above our estimate of 13.2%. PAT of INR1,598m (up 2.6% QoQ/down 1.2% YoY) beat our estimate of INR1,431m, led by higher EBIT & other income. For 9MFY25, revenue grew 6.8%, whereas EBIT/PAT declined 5.8%/3.7% vs. 9MFY24. For 4QFY25, we expect revenue/EBIT/PAT to grow by 11.4%/10.1%/1.3% YoY. Our TP of INR850 is based on 23x FY27E EPS.

Reiterate Neutral.

Our view: Strong deal wins in 3Q

- **Growth (excl. Hi-tech) robust despite furloughs:** ZENT reported decent overall growth, led by strong growth in Healthcare and BFSI. The TMT (Telecom, Media, and Technology) segment faced declined by 3.5% QoQ CC due to client-specific furloughs. Despite persistent issues in the top account, we believe ZENT's execution is impressive, and as the company continues to diversify, growth should de-couple in the coming quarters.
- **Deal wins healthy:** ZENT achieved its highest-ever order book of USD205m in 3Q, with a book-to-bill ratio of 1.3x, supported by broad-based deal wins. Notably, this was the second consecutive quarter of more than USD200m in order bookings. Since ZENT's practice of counting only signed statements of work ensures almost a 100% conversion rate, underscoring revenue predictability, in our view.
- **Discretionary spending slowly coming back:** Management noted that discretionary spending is gradually recovering. This recovery aligns with client interest in emerging technologies such as GenAI and Agentic AI, which ZENT has proactively embraced through its innovative AI solutions. Despite macroeconomic uncertainties, we believe early signs of client optimism suggest that discretionary spending could further accelerate if these technologies gain widespread adoption.
- **Stable margins:** Margins were impacted by SG&A (-180bp), which was offset by volume and utilization benefits (+10bp), higher leave utilization (+90bp), operational efficiencies (+80bp) and exchange impact on GM (+10bp). As a result, EBITDA margin expanded 20bp QoQ. We believe the new management has proven that it can deliver on margins.
- **Hi-tech may continue to drag down growth in FY26E:** We note the company's impressive execution in banking, manufacturing, and healthcare, and expect ZENT revenue (excl. Hi-Tech) to grow by ~16% in FY26E. That said, a 10% decline in Hi-Tech could drag down overall revenue growth to 10% in FY26E. Hence, we sit on the sidelines.

Bloomberg	ZENT IN
Equity Shares (m)	227
M.Cap.(INRb)/(USDb)	170.2 / 2
52-Week Range (INR)	840 / 513
1, 6, 12 Rel. Per (%)	0/6/26
12M Avg Val (INR M)	772

Financials & Valuations (INR b)

Y/E Mar	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Sales	52.9	58.8	64.9
EBIT Margin (%)	13.7	14.1	14.5
PAT	6.5	7.4	8.4
EPS (INR)	28.4	32.4	36.6
EPS Gr. (%)	-2.5	14.3	12.7
BV/Sh. (INR)	177.7	201.3	227.9

Ratios

RoE (%)	17.1	17.3	17.2
RoCE (%)	13.6	13.9	14.0
Payout (%)	24.0	24.0	24.0

Valuations

P/E (x)	26.6	23.3	20.6
P/BV (x)	4.2	3.8	3.3
EV/EBITDA (x)	18.6	15.9	13.5
Div Yield (%)	0.9	1.0	1.2

Shareholding pattern (%)

As On	Dec-24	Sep-24	Dec-23
Promoter	49.1	49.1	49.2
DII	19.8	19.1	16.5
FII	15.1	14.8	17.1
Others	16.0	17.0	17.2

FII Includes depository receipts

Valuation and change in estimates

- We expect ZENT to deliver EBITDA margin of 15.6%/15.9%/16.3% in FY25/FY26/FY27. This will result in an INR PAT CAGR of 8.0% over FY24-27E. We have raised our FY25/FY26/FY27 estimates by ~5%, supported by a decent 3Q print in a seasonally weak quarter and a robust order book. Our TP of INR850 is based on 23x FY27E EPS. **Retain Neutral.**

Revenue largely in line and margins beat; TMT declined QoQ

- ZENT revenue stood at USD157m, up 0.5% QoQ in USD terms, ahead of our estimate of flat growth QoQ. Reported USD revenue rose 0.7% QoQ CC.
- Growth was driven by Manufacturing & Consumer services (up 6.5% QoQ CC), followed by Healthcare & Life Sciences (up 3.2% QoQ CC). TMT/BFSI declined 3.5%/1.3% QoQ CC.
- Deal TCV: bookings came in at USD205.3m (up 1.7% QoQ/22.6% YoY) and the book-to-bill was 1.3x.
- EBIT margin was 13.8% (est. 13.2%), up 70bp QoQ.
- In 3Q, total headcount increased by 2.7% QoQ to 10,517. LTM attrition was 10% (flat QoQ). Utilization was flat QoQ at 82.9%.
- PAT of INR1,598m (up 2.6% QoQ/down 1.2% YoY) beat our estimate of INR1,431m, led by higher EBIT and other income.

Key highlights from the management commentary

- Both farming (deepening existing client relationships) and hunting (acquiring new clients) are critical for building large accounts. Over the past two years, the company has significantly strengthened its farming efforts, successfully adding one client to the USD20m revenue bucket.
- Discretionary spending trends will align with emerging market trends. For example, if Generative AI (Gen-AI) gains widespread adoption, it could lead to a significant increase in discretionary spending.
- Order bookings were broad-based and did not include any large deals. However, the company is currently in discussions regarding 2-3 significant deals.
- The company is focusing more on building annuity revenue, which provides stability, rather than relying on discretionary spending. Large deals are a key avenue for this strategy.
- Depreciation as a percentage of revenue declined to 1.7% and is expected to remain at this level. The increase in SG&A expenses was attributed to higher investments in sales and marketing.

Valuation and view

- We believe the company's exposure to the Hi-Tech vertical could continue to weigh on growth in the near term; however, it will be offset by a recovery in BFS. We have raised our FY25/FY26/FY27 estimates by 5%, supported by a solid 3Q performance (despite the impact of furloughs) and a robust order book. Our TP of INR850 is based on 23x FY27E EPS. **Retain Neutral.**

Quarterly Performance

Y/E March	FY24				FY25E				FY24	FY25E	Est. 3QFY25	Var. (% / bp)
	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4QE				
Revenue (USD m)	149	150	145	148	154	156	157	159	592	627	156	0.6
QoQ (%)	1.2	0.6	-3.7	2.3	4.3	1.2	0.5	1.4	-2.0	5.8	-0.1	58bp
Revenue (INR m)	12,272	12,408	12,041	12,297	12,881	13,080	13,256	13,696	49,018	52,913	13,162	0.7
YoY (%)	2.0	0.5	0.5	1.4	5.0	5.4	10.1	11.4	1.1	7.9	9.3	78bp
GPM (%)	33.6	31.8	31.1	30.6	30.4	28.1	30.1	30.5	31.8	29.8	29.3	80bp
SGA (%)	14.9	13.2	13.9	14.1	15.2	12.7	14.5	14.3	14.0	14.2	13.8	69bp
EBITDA	2,301	2,308	2,076	2,030	1,961	2,011	2,069	2,219	8,715	8,260	2,040	1.4
EBITDA Margin (%)	18.8	18.6	17.2	16.5	15.2	15.4	15.6	16.2	17.8	15.6	15.5	11bp
EBIT	1,878	1,942	1,764	1,793	1,714	1,714	1,832	1,974	7,377	7,235	1,737	5.5
EBIT Margin (%)	15.3	15.7	14.6	14.6	13.3	13.1	13.8	14.4	15.0	13.7	13.2	62bp
Other income	224	306	356	493	383	366	270	342	1,379	1,361	171	57.8
ETR (%)	25.7	22.7	23.8	24.2	24.7	25.1	24.0	24.2	24.1	24.5	25.0	
Adj. PAT	1,562	1,738	1,616	1,733	1,579	1,558	1,597	1,756	6,649	6,490	1,431	11.6
QoQ (%)	30.9	11.3	-7.0	7.2	-8.9	-1.3	2.5	10.0			-8.2	
YoY (%)	108.0	206.0	111.2	45.3	1.1	-10.4	-1.2	1.3	102.9	-2.4	-11.5	
EPS (INR)	6.8	7.6	7.1	7.6	6.9	6.8	7.0	7.7	29.1	28.4	6.3	11.4

Key Performance Indicators

Y/E March	FY24				FY25E			FY24
	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	
Revenue (QoQ CC %)	1.3	0.2	(3.2)	2.0	4.3	0.3	0.7	
Margins								
Gross Margin	33.6	31.8	31.1	30.6	30.4	28.1	30.1	31.8
EBIT Margin	15.3	15.7	14.6	14.6	13.3	13.1	13.8	15.0
Net Margin	12.7	14.0	13.4	14.1	12.3	11.9	12.0	13.6
Operating metrics								
Headcount	10,540	10,330	10,225	10,349	10,396	10,240	10,517	10,349
LTM Attrition (%)	15.9	13.1	12.0	10.9	10.6	10.1	10.0	11
Offshore Rev	48.0	49.1	49.6	50.0	48.6	50.3	50.5	50.0
Key Geographies (YoY USD %)								
North America	(6.3)	(10.5)	(6.5)	(5.7)	2.4	6.4	10.6	(7.3)
UK	1.6	20.3	13.5	15.4	6.6	1.6	7.5	12.6
Africa	(0.8)	8.4	9.7	14.3	4.3	(4.5)	(0.2)	7.9



Key highlights from the management commentary

Growth and outlook

- The company is observing early signs of discretionary spending based on client conversations. Operational excellence, robust database governance, and a strong focus on client centricity have boosted the company's resilience. ZENT now feels optimistic and confident about adopting an aggressive approach to business growth.
- Both farming (deepening existing client relationships) and hunting (acquiring new clients) are critical for building large accounts. Over the past two years, the company has significantly strengthened its farming efforts, successfully adding one client to the USD20m revenue bucket.
- Discretionary spending trends will align with emerging market trends. For example, if Gen-AI gains widespread adoption, it could lead to a significant increase in discretionary spending.
- Operational excellence, robust database governance, and a strong focus on client centricity have boosted the company's resilience. ZENT now feels optimistic and confident about adopting an aggressive approach to business growth.

- Despite a seasonally weak quarter, the company achieved 8.6% YoY growth. Some pockets experienced furlough-related challenges, but the impact was limited. The company's healthcare segment was not significantly affected by the Bridgeview integration and is now reported as a combined entity.
- Order bookings were broad-based and did not include any large deals. However, the company is currently in discussions regarding 2-3 significant deals. The deal pipeline remains healthy, albeit slightly lower, as win rates have improved.
- While furlough effects and fewer working days may slightly affect performance, the company expects a positive outlook for the next quarter. A significant portion of the order book is concentrated in the BFSI sector and Europe.
- ZENT considers signed statements of work as deal wins, implying a 100% conversion of the order book.
- The company is focusing more on building annuity revenue, which provides stability, rather than relying on discretionary spending. Large deals are a key avenue for this strategy.
- Manufacturing & Consumer led growth with a 6.5% QoQ CC increase. One client progressed from the USD10m revenue bucket to the USD20m bucket.
- Health Care & Life Science: The demand environment remained soft. Life sciences faced uncertainty regarding competition between Viva and Salesforce in the CRM space. The industry is preparing for reduced remuneration rates for certain drugs, with the new trump administration expected to adopt stricter healthcare cost policies, leading to conservative spending.
- Telecommunications, Media & Technology: Revenue declined 3.5% QoQ CC. ZENT is focusing on growing other business segments faster than TMT to diversify its revenue mix. The TMT segment's revenue share dropped from 27% last year to about 21% this quarter. The company added a new client in the semiconductor space and expects mild growth in TMT in 4Q as furlough impacts subside.
- ZENT remains committed to talent development and innovation, with plans to increase headcount. The company expects to recruit more talent from campuses as growth accelerates.
- During the quarter, ZENT deployed four major AI stack solutions for clients. The company highlighted the significance of Gen AI (based on large language models) and Agentic AI, which creates agents on top of these models. ZENT believes that Agentic AI is crucial for the adoption and popularity of GenAI.

Margin performance and outlook

- EBITDA margins stood at 15.6%, a 20bp QoQ improvement. Margins were impacted by SG&A (-180bp), offset by volume and utilization benefits (+10bp), higher leave utilization (+90bp), operational efficiencies (+80bp) and exchange impact on GM (+10bp), leading to a net increase of 20bp QoQ in EBITDA margin.
- EBIT margins improved by 70bp QoQ to 13.8%.
- EBITDA margin was in line with the guidance of mid-teen margin. Depreciation as a percentage of revenue declined to 1.7% and is expected to remain at this level.
- The increase in SG&A expenses was attributed to higher investments in sales and marketing.

- The company expects to maintain the guided range of mid-teens, and anything above mid-teens will be recouped in business for building sales and capabilities.

Exhibit 1: Manufacturing and Healthcare witnessed strong growth

Verticals	Revenue contribution (%)	Growth QoQ (CC)
Hi-Tech	21.4	(3.5)
Manufacturing	27.7	6.5
Banking	40.1	(1.3)
Healthcare	10.8	3.2

Source: Company, MOFSL

Exhibit 2: Europe performed well in 3Q

Geographies	Revenue contribution (%)	Growth QoQ (CC)
North America	67.3	0.2
Europe	21.2	2.2
Africa	11.5	1.5

Source: Company, MOFSL

Valuation and view

- We believe the company's exposure to the Hi-Tech vertical could continue to weigh on growth in the near term; however, it will be offset by a recovery in BFS. We have raised our FY25/FY26/FY27 estimates by 5%, supported by a solid 3Q performance (despite the impact of furloughs) and a robust order book. Our TP of INR850 is based on 23x FY27E EPS. **Retain Neutral.**

Exhibit 3: Summary of our revised estimates

	Revised			Earlier			Change		
	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
INR/USD	84.4	86.0	86.0	84.1	84.9	84.9	0.4%	1.3%	1.3%
USD Revenue - m	627	683	754	625	680	750	0.3%	0.6%	0.6%
Growth (%)	5.8	9.0	10.4	5.5	8.7	10.4	30bps	30bps	0bps
EBIT margin (%)	13.7	14.1	14.5	13.5	15.0	15.5	20bps	-80bps	-100bps
PAT (INR m)	6,490	7,419	8,364	6,151	7,053	8,028	5.5%	5.2%	4.2%
EPS	28.4	32.4	36.6	26.9	30.9	35.1	5.4%	5.1%	4.1%

Source: Company, MOFSL

Exhibit 4: Operating metrics

	3QFY23	4QFY23	1QFY24	2QFY24	3QFY24	4QFY24	1QFY25	2QFY25	3QFY25
Geographic Mix - %									
USA	70	70	69	66	66	66	69	68	67
Europe	19	18	19	22	21	21	20	21	21
ROW	11	12	11	12	13	13	12	11	12
Revenue by delivery - %									
Onsite	55	54	52	51	50	50	51	50	50
Offshore	45	46	48	49	50	50	49	50	51
Client concentration - %									
Top 5	32	34	34	32	29	28	28	29	28
Top 6-10	13	12	11	11	11	13	14	14	14
Top 10	45	46	45	42	41	41	42	42	41
Top 11-20	17	15	17	16	17	16	17	16	16
Top 20	61	61	62	58	58	57	59	58	57
Number of million dollar clients									
1 Million dollar +	87	84	87	84	84	85	86	86	87
5 Million dollar +	28	29	29	29	32	31	31	32	34
10 Million dollar +	15	14	14	14	14	14	14	15	14
20 Million dollar +	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
Client metrics									
Number of active clients	148	148	147	148	147	148	148	158	158
Employee metrics									
Total headcount	10,845	10,563	10,540	10,330	10,225	10,349	10,396	10,240	10,517
Gross employees added during the period	593	552	654	643	627	816	855	693	975
Utilization	77.6	81.4	82.5	83.1	80.7	83.7	83.9	82.8	82.9
Attrition	22.8	19.8	15.9	13.1	12.0	10.9	10.6	10.1	10.0

Source: Company, MOFSL

Financials and valuations

Income Statement								(INR m)
Y/E March	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Sales	40,102	36,681	42,437	48,483	49,018	52,913	58,780	64,868
Change (%)	2.9	(8.5)	15.7	14.2	1.1	7.9	11.1	10.4
Cost of Services	28,756	24,417	29,214	35,000	33,434	37,159	40,852	45,083
Gross Profit	11,347	12,264	13,223	13,483	15,584	15,754	17,928	19,785
SG&A Expenses	6,310	5,422	6,659	7,960	6,869	7,494	8,563	9,211
EBITDA	5,037	6,842	6,564	5,523	8,715	8,260	9,365	10,573
% of Net Sales	12.6	18.7	15.5	11.4	17.8	15.6	15.9	16.3
Depreciation	1,567	1,732	1,849	1,830	1,338	1,025	1,048	1,162
EBIT	3,470	5,109	4,715	3,693	7,377	7,235	8,317	9,411
% of Net Sales	8.7	13.9	11.1	7.6	15.0	13.7	14.1	14.5
Interest	605	536	354	278	209	192	294	324
Other Income	435	367	907	642	1,583	1,863	1,763	1,946
Forex	449	-113	470	386	5	-309	0	0
PBT	3,749	4,828	5,738	4,443	8,756	8,596	9,786	11,033
Tax	1,038	1,261	1,525	1,166	2,107	2,106	2,368	2,669
Rate (%)	27.7	26.1	26.6	26.2	24.1	24.5	24.2	24.2
Minority Interest	82	70	53	0	0	0	0	0
Adjusted PAT	2,629	3,497	4,160	3,277	6,649	6,490	7,419	8,364
Change (%)	-18.9	33.0	19.0	-21.2	102.9	-2.4	14.3	12.7

Balance Sheet								(INR m)
Y/E March	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Share Capital	451	451	452	453	453	453	453	453
Reserves	20,900	23,423	26,417	29,309	35,166	39,847	45,197	51,228
Net Worth	21,351	23,874	26,869	29,762	35,619	40,300	45,650	51,681
Loans	2,886	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other liabilities	4,008	3,526	3,544	2,866	2,319	2,319	2,319	2,319
Capital Employed	28,244	27,401	30,413	32,628	37,938	42,619	47,969	54,000
Net Block	13,340	11,330	12,858	11,735	10,393	10,168	9,919	9,557
Other LT Assets	2,039	3,076	3,226	6,291	10,144	10,263	10,441	10,626
Curr. Assets	20,576	19,928	22,628	23,184	25,941	31,506	37,919	45,195
Current Investments	2,670	7,410	5,141	7,045	9,315	11,315	13,315	15,315
Inventories	941	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Debtors	6,656	5,888	7,967	7,298	7,320	8,698	9,662	10,663
Cash & Bank Balance	5,258	3,492	5,054	4,744	4,432	6,232	9,097	12,767
Other Current Assets	5,051	3,138	4,466	4,097	4,874	5,261	5,845	6,450
Current Liab. & Prov	7,711	6,933	8,299	8,582	8,540	9,317	10,311	11,379
Trade payables	2,650	2,201	3,164	2,772	3,095	3,440	3,782	4,173
Other liabilities	5,061	4,732	5,135	5,810	5,445	5,878	6,529	7,206
Net Current Assets	12,865	12,994	14,329	14,602	17,401	22,188	27,608	33,817
Application of Funds	28,245	27,400	30,413	32,628	37,938	42,619	47,969	54,000

Financials and valuations

Ratios

Y/E March	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
EPS	11.7	15.3	18.3	14.4	29.1	28.4	32.4	36.6
Cash EPS	18.6	22.9	26.5	22.4	35.0	32.9	37.0	41.7
Book Value	96.3	105.7	119.0	131.5	157.3	177.7	201.3	227.9
DPS	2.8	6.4	5.0	5.0	7.0	6.8	7.8	8.8
Payout %	24.0	41.8	27.3	34.8	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0

Valuation (x)

P/E	64.7	49.3	41.2	52.6	25.9	26.6	23.3	20.6
Cash P/E	40.5	33.0	28.5	33.7	21.6	23.0	20.4	18.1
EV/EBITDA	32.2	23.3	24.4	28.8	18.0	18.6	15.9	13.5
EV/Sales	4.0	4.3	3.8	3.3	3.2	2.9	2.5	2.2
Price/Book Value	7.8	7.1	6.3	5.7	4.8	4.2	3.8	3.3
Dividend Yield (%)	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.2

Profitability Ratios (%)

RoE	12.9	15.5	16.4	11.6	20.3	17.1	17.3	17.2
RoCE	10.6	14.1	12.0	8.6	15.9	13.6	13.9	14.0

Turnover Ratios

Debtors (Days)	61	59	69	55	55	60	60	60
Fixed Asset Turnover (x)	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.9	4.4	5.1	5.9	6.7

Cash Flow Statement

(INR m)

Y/E March	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
CF from Operations	4,508	5,432	5,774	5,030	6,901	6,154	6,998	7,904
Cash for Working Capital	2,354	3,148	-2,427	2,113	-480	-1,106	-733	-723
Net Operating CF	6,862	8,580	3,347	7,143	6,421	5,048	6,265	7,181
Net Purchase of FA	-781	-393	-373	-334	-151	-800	-800	-800
Free Cash Flow	6,081	8,187	2,974	6,809	6,270	4,248	5,465	6,381
Net Purchase of Invest.	-2,372	-4,890	400	-4,941	-4,600	-446	-237	-54
Net Cash from Invest.	-3,153	-5,283	27	-5,275	-4,751	-1,246	-1,037	-854
Proc. from equity issues	15	15	32	4	1	0	0	0
Proceeds from LTB/STB	-502	-4,505	-1,260	-1,058	-726	-192	-294	-324
Dividend Payments	-1,228	-271	-881	-1,132	-1,246	-1,810	-2,069	-2,332
Cash Flow from Fin.	-1,714	-4,761	-2,109	-2,186	-1,971	-2,002	-2,363	-2,657
Exchange difference	4	-20	14	8	-11	0	0	0
Net Cash Flow	1,999	-1,483	1,279	-310	-312	1,799	2,866	3,670
Opening Cash Bal.	3,259	5,258	3,775	5,054	4,744	4,432	6,231	9,097
Add: Net Cash	1,999	-1,483	1,279	-310	-312	1,799	2,866	3,670
Closing Cash Bal.	5,258	3,775	5,054	4,744	4,432	6,231	9,097	12,767

Investment in securities market are subject to market risks. Read all the related documents carefully before investing

Explanation of Investment Rating	
Investment Rating	Expected return (over 12-month)
BUY	>=15%
SELL	< - 10%
NEUTRAL	< - 10 % to 15%
UNDER REVIEW	Rating may undergo a change
NOT RATED	We have forward looking estimates for the stock but we refrain from assigning recommendation

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