

Stonehill: Rising M&A Activity Will Put Post-Merger Integration Capabilities to the Test

Consulting firm says the next wave of M&A winners will be determined by their ability to integrate operations, capture synergies, and maintain business momentum

TAMPA, FL, UNITED STATES, September 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Stonehill, a design thinking and [strategy consulting firm](#), today shared its outlook on the mergers and acquisitions market, warning that increasing transaction activity will place greater pressure on companies to convert deal strategy into measurable operational results.

The global M&A market entered 2026 with significant momentum. Bain & Company reports that global deal value increased 41% during the first five months of the year, putting the market on pace for its second-highest year on record. In the United States, PwC reports that deal value reached \$1.2 trillion during the same period - nearly double the prior year - even as transaction volume declined slightly.

Stonehill believes these trends point to a more selective but increasingly consequential deal environment. Larger transactions, higher purchase prices, technological disruption, and continued economic uncertainty are raising the expectations placed on management teams. Buyers must demonstrate not only that they selected the right target, but that they can integrate the business quickly, retain critical talent, capture synergies, and establish a scalable operating



model.

“The market is clearly moving, but completing the transaction is only the beginning,” said Doug Pace, CEO of Stonehill. “The companies that create the most value will be those that enter a deal with a practical integration strategy, clear accountability, and the ability to make decisions quickly. Integration can no longer be treated as an administrative exercise that starts after closing.”

According to Stonehill, many integrations underperform because organizations focus heavily on financial and legal close activities while delaying critical operational decisions. Leadership responsibilities remain unclear, business processes continue to operate independently, technology platforms are not rationalized, and employees receive inconsistent communication. These conditions can slow decision-making, disrupt customers, increase employee turnover, and postpone the realization of anticipated deal value.

Stonehill expects five priorities to shape successful post-merger integrations during the current market cycle:

- Integration readiness before close. Buyers should establish the integration thesis, governance structure, leadership responsibilities, decision rights, and Day One priorities before the transaction closes.
- Faster operational alignment. Organizations must rapidly determine which processes, systems, policies, and capabilities will become the enterprise standard rather than allowing parallel operations to persist indefinitely.
- Increased focus on talent and culture. Retaining key employees, clarifying roles, and communicating the future operating model will be essential as competition for specialized talent remains high.
- Greater technology complexity. ERP platforms, data environments, cybersecurity controls, automation, and AI capabilities must be addressed as core integration workstreams—not deferred technology projects.
- Stronger performance governance. Integration leaders need measurable targets, executive-level reporting, and clear accountability for synergy realization, milestones, risks, and operational performance.

“The greatest integration risk is often not a lack of effort - it is a lack of coordinated execution,” Pace said. “Integration work can become fragmented across departments, consultants, and functional leaders. A disciplined integration management office creates a single source of truth, accelerates decisions, and keeps the organization focused on the value the transaction was intended to create.”

Stonehill recommends that companies develop repeatable integration capabilities rather than rebuilding the approach for every acquisition. This includes standardized playbooks, diligence-to-integration handoffs, governance protocols, functional workplans, synergy tracking, communication plans, and executive dashboards. These capabilities are particularly important

for private equity firms and strategic acquirers pursuing platform, add-on, or serial acquisition strategies.

Stonehill has supported complex integrations involving organizations ranging from founder-led businesses to national, private equity-backed enterprises. Its work has included leading integration management offices, coordinating more than 25 mergers over a two-year period, supporting a platform through 14 acquisitions, managing carve-out and transition service agreement requirements, integrating business processes and technology platforms, developing employee training, and establishing operational KPIs.

“Acquisitions can accelerate growth, expand capabilities, and open new markets, but only when the combined organization can operate effectively,” Pace added. “In this market, integration readiness will become a competitive advantage. Buyers that can integrate faster and more consistently will be better positioned to pursue additional transactions while their competitors are still working through the last one.”

Stonehill’s [Post-Merger Integration](#) services include integration strategy, pre-close planning, integration management office leadership, Day One readiness, operating-model design, organizational alignment, process integration, technology coordination, synergy management, change management, training, and performance reporting.

About Stonehill

Stonehill is a nationally recognized strategy and innovation consultancy serving Fortune 1000 companies, private equity, and government clients. The firm specializes in helping organizations navigate their most complex and sensitive challenges, including post-merger integration, [organizational design](#), process improvement, strategy, customer experience, technology, and artificial intelligence. Known for handling its clients’ boldest ideas, Stonehill has facilitated billions of dollars in mergers and delivered solutions that have touched millions of lives. For more information, visit stonehillinnovation.com.

Julie Stollings
Stonehill Innovation
+1 813-444-1984

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Facebook](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/938788390>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something

we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.