



FTI Consulting Survey: Majority of Private Equity Leaders Say M&A Is Not a Top Priority for 2025

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WASHINGTON, June 24, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- FTI Consulting, Inc. (NYSE: FCN) today released the 2025 [Private Equity Value Creation Index](#), which found that M&A ranked last among 10 value creation levers, with only 9% of global private equity leaders naming it their top priority for 2025.

The survey of more than 500 global private equity decision makers highlights ways in which firms continue to over index on conventional cost levers — such as cost structure optimization, supply chain and operations — which are widely used and effectively executed, while growth strategies remain underutilized or face a clear execution gap.

At the same time, artificial intelligence (“AI”) has emerged as the top strategic priority for 2025 — and the leading factor for exit readiness — signaling its growing importance in positioning portfolio companies for long-term value. Yet, it remains one of the least frequently used and most challenging levers to implement.

“Cost has become the dominant conversation,” said [Jiva J. Jagtap](#), Global Leader of Private Equity at FTI Consulting. “In a high-uncertainty, low-growth market, cost is often the most immediate lever for protecting value. But cost alone doesn’t deliver returns. High-performing firms treat it as a catalyst, using savings to reinvest in the capabilities and growth engines that drive sustainable value creation. Growth is harder to unlock — which is exactly why it’s more valuable. And while M&A has fallen as a near-term priority due to integration hurdles and valuation gaps, that very pullback may open a window of opportunity for disciplined buyers to make strategic moves.”

Additional key findings include:

- Technology and IT emerged as both the most frequently used and most effective value creation lever, with 84% of respondents using it regularly and 77% rating its effectiveness as above average. Yet despite its strong track record, technology was also cited as the top execution challenge at the portfolio company level.
- M&A remains a staple in the value creation toolkit, but it was rated the worst-performing value creation lever, and 67% of respondents indicated that it takes more than a year to achieve the value they expected. With deals hard to execute and slow to deliver returns, success becomes a collective effort. Portfolio company leaders, operating partners and deal teams must all play their part to ensure strong operational governance, common goals and clear communications. Any breakdown here can undermine value.
- AI usage is advancing rapidly, with 42% of private equity leaders saying it is the biggest force transforming traditional models. However, despite all the hype, it ranks ninth out of the 10 value creation levers surveyed in how often it is used and how well it is implemented — indicating that many firms are still struggling to integrate AI into their operations efficiently.
- Despite their potential to drive top-line growth, commercial levers remain among the least frequently used levers — with only 23% to 28% of firms reporting that they use levers like pricing optimization, AI and sales and marketing very often for value creation. Execution confidence also ranks among the lowest, signaling the complexity and resource demands of growth strategies.

“AI is no longer a futuristic concept — it’s firmly on the agenda for private equity. But intent alone isn’t enough,” said [Lars Faeste](#), EMEA Chairman at FTI Consulting. “We’re seeing a clear gap between ambition and execution as firms wrestle with how to move from strategy to impact. The next phase of value creation isn’t just about financial engineering or cost reduction — it’s about disciplined execution in a more complex and unforgiving landscape. Success will come to the firms that translate innovation into outcomes, embedding technology and growth levers into how the business truly operates, scales and delivers value.”

Click [here](#) for more insights from the *2025 Private Equity Value Creation Index*.

Demographics and Methodology

In April 2025, FTI Consulting surveyed more than 500 decision makers at private equity firms, including investment professionals and operating partners, to understand the levers these firms use to create value in their portfolio companies. The survey included global participation from the United States, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia Pacific.

About FTI Consulting

FTI Consulting, Inc. is a leading global expert firm for organizations facing crisis and transformation, with more than 8,100 employees located in 33 countries and territories as of March 31, 2025. In certain jurisdictions, FTI Consulting’s services are provided through distinct legal entities that are separately capitalized and independently managed. The Company generated \$3.70 billion in revenues during fiscal year 2024. More information can be found at www.fticonsulting.com.

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