



M&A in Advertising, Marketing Services & Marketing Technologies

[Q1 2021]

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Promising Indicators

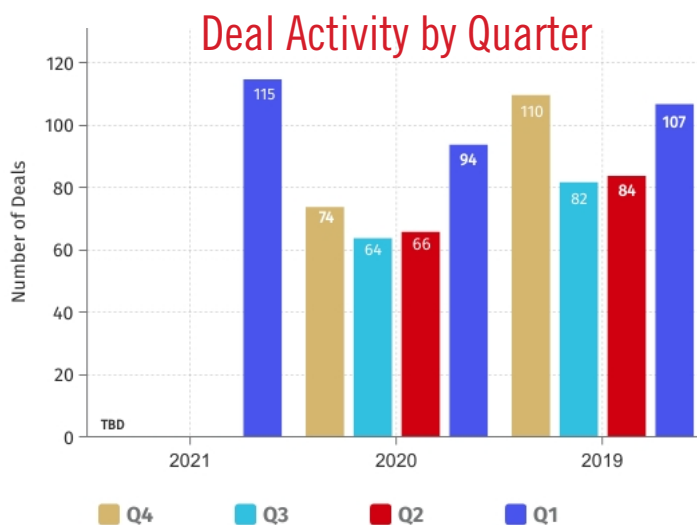
We tracked 115 relevant transactions during Q1 of 2021, up 22% over the same period a year ago and more reassuringly, back to being on par with Q1 2019. Given that deals often take six or more months to reach completion, the cautious optimism among buyers we remarked upon in our Q4 2020 bulletin looks now to be bearing fruit. COVID-19 is not behind us yet, but as agencies begin to set dates for a voluntary return to their offices, and from our experience, an increase in sell-side mandates suggest a positive recovery ahead.

Highlights from Q1

Accenture continued its acquisition strategy and again tops the list of major buyers with 8 acquisitions in Q1: Talent consultancy, **Cirrus**; Cloud developer, **Cygni**; Digital consultancy, **Edenhouse**; German consulting firm, **fable+**; Cloud engineering firm, **Imaginea**; Digital consultancy, **Infinity Works**; Brazilian industrial robotics and automation company, **Pollux**; and Technology consultancy, **REPL Group**.

S4 Capital was almost as active with 6 deals completed. **S4's Mediamonks** added Data-driven content shop, **Decoded Advertising**; Design & experience agency, **Jam3**; Digital consultancy, **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**; Production studio, **STAUD STUDIOS**; and Creative agency, **Tomorrow**. **S4's Mightyhive** added Performance marketing agency, **Metric Theory**.

Fimalac Group's Jellyfish jumped into our major buyers table with 5 acquisitions during the first quarter: Software consultancy, **Seelk**; Data solutions consultant, **Data Runs Deep**; Performance content provider, **Quill**; Creative tech services firm, **Splash**; and Gamification, content and tech service company, **Webedia Brand Services**.



Major Buyers

Company	Q1 2021	2020 Deals	2019 Deals
Accenture	8	19	18
S4 Capital	6	6	7
Jellyfish	5	3	3
WPP	2	5	2
HAVAS	2	3	6
Publicis	2	1	4
Cognizant	2	5	1
W20	2	5	3
Dentsu	1	5	11
Deloitte	1	3	1
Acceleration Partners	2	0	0
Fishawack	2	1	2
Yum Brands	2	0	0

More Promising Indicators

Pandemic, What Pandemic: Internet Ad Spending Surged 12.2% To \$139.8B In 2020

Despite -- or maybe because of -- the COVID-19 pandemic, internet ad spending soared 12.2% during 2020 to \$139.8 billion, according to a just-released annual report from the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) and PwC. While the first half of 2020 -- especially the second quarter, which declined 5.2% vs. the same quarter a year earlier -- did languish from the U.S. shutdown, and the cancellation of many ad budgets, the second half more than compensated for it. [More](#): MediaPost, April 7, 2021

Magna Boosts 2021 U.S. Ad Outlook, Moves 2020 Into Positive Territory Too

IPG Mediabrands' Magna Global unit becomes the second major agency forecasting unit to update its U.S. advertising outlook, revising its 2021 forecast to +6.4%, a 2.3 percentage-point improvement for the 4.1% growth it was projecting for the U.S. ad economy when it released its last estimate in December 2020. The move follows GroupM's update, released last Saturday, which revised the WPP unit's 2021 U.S. ad outlook up by 3.1 percentage points to +9.1%. [More](#): MediaPost, March 31, 2021

WPP Reports 2020 Shortfall, Projects 'Solid Recovery' For 2021

WPP reported a 2020 net revenue decline of 10% to £9.762 billion (approximately \$13.6 billion). The organic revenue decline (which excludes M&A and currency impact) was 8.2%. The shortfall was attributed largely to the COVID-19 pandemic. Like the other major holding companies, WPP experienced improvement in the second half of the year and is expecting a return to organic growth in the mid-single-digit range for 2021. [More](#): MediaPost, March 11, 2021

The Consolidation Trend Continues

WPP merger-mania unites Wunderman, Possible and Cole & Weber in single office

WPP's merger spree is gathering pace with a decision to unite Wunderman, Possible and Cole & Weber within a single Wunderman Thompson Seattle office -- mere months after the coming together of J. Walter Thompson and Wunderman. A direct extension of that earlier deal the latest unification will see the Seattle offices of each agency operating under a single banner, all housed within Possible's former global headquarters, from 29 March. [More](#): The Drum, March 13, 2021

Publicis Groupe Deal Rumors Heat Up Again

Publicis Groupe is once again in the headlines over rumors that the French ad holding company is in discussion with Havas-parent Vivendi about a potential merger. Vivendi calls the reports "unfounded" while Publicis Groupe has declined comment. [More](#): MediaPost, March 29, 2021

Dentsu folds Vizeum into iProspect

Tokyo based ad giant Dentsu will fold media agency Vizeum within performance marketing specialists iProspect to forge a "future-focused, end-to-end global media agency". The integration will use Vizeum's media strategy and planning, storytelling, and brand-building capabilities with iProspect's digital expertise, audience knowledge, and performance mindset to provide clients with access to the best of both worlds. [More:](#) The Drum, January 14, 2021

Some Pandemic Changes are Here to Stay

Pandemic Accelerated Shift To Digital, And Nobody Is Going Back: Study

Most brands agree that the pandemic accelerated their digital transformation, according to Making the Leap to a Digital-First Enterprise, a study from Amplitude, conducted by Harvard Business Review Analytic Services. Of 295 global business executives polled, 97% agree that COVID-19 sped up their migration into digital. And 92% say this represents an opportunity to capitalize on the shift. [More:](#) MediaPost, February 17, 2021

Publicis Groupe Creates 'Le Truc' Creative Collective

Publicis Groupe is bringing together 600 creatives, strategists and producers under one creative umbrella titled "Le Truc." This network builds on the company's Power of One unification and seeks to address post-pandemic working conditions and changing client demands. [More:](#) MediaPost, February 11, 2021

In Other News

Despite In-Housing Trend, Clients Continue To Value Agency Relationships

While brands have taken numerous marketing capabilities in house in recent years, a new Forrester report – commissioned by the 4As and Google – concludes that agency-client relationships remain strong, albeit with room for improvement. [More:](#) MediaPost, January 26, 2021

When two agencies become one: all the things nobody tells you about marketing mergers.

A smart merger or acquisition can take a business to the next level. But after the champagne's been corked and the confetti swept aside, the hard work isn't over. To find out how best to dodge the pitfalls and potholes of the M&A road, we picked the brains of agency bosses at recently acquired or merged businesses. [More:](#) The Drum, March 29, 2021

Q1 2021 deals

For more information about individual transactions, click on the buyer's name.

JANUARY

BUYER	TARGET	SECTOR (TARGET)	VALUATION
Acceleration Partners	Streamline Marketing	Performance Marketing Agency	
Adthema	Kantar's AdGooroo	Paid-Search Intelligence	
Adweek	Social Media Week	Events and Content Company	
Allison+Partners	Sommerfield	Corporate Communications	
Blackstone	Liftoff	Mobile App Platform	Majority Stake
Bloomberg	Second Measure	Data Analytics Platform	
Cognizant	Inawisdom	AI and Machine Learning Services	
Cognizant	Magenic Technologies	Custom Software Development Services	
Creative Artists Agency (CAA)	Tandem Entertainment	Creative Agency	
Dentsu's iProspect	Dentsu's Vizeum	Media Agency	Merger
Fishawack Health	Kin + Carta's The Hive Health Group	Healthcare Marketing	£14 million
Fishawack Health	Stonearch	Creative Agency	
Huron	Unico Solution	Data Management Consultant	
IBM	7Summits	Consulting Firm	
Innovatus Capital Partners	VSA Partners	Creative Agency	
ISpot	Ace Metrix	Consumer Reaction Survey Company	
Milestone Technologies	Covestic	IT Service Management	
Phenomenon	Marketing Supply Co.	Digital Agency	
Power Digital	Social Method	Digital Agency	
Prime Technology Group	Synerzip	Software Development Partner	Merger
S4 Capital's Mediamonks	Decoded Advertising	Data-Driven Content	
S4 Capital's Mediamonks	Low Earth Orbit (LEO)	Digital Consultancy	
S4 Capital's Mediamonks	STAUD STUDIOS	Production Studio	

Q1 2021 deals

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	BUYER	TARGET	SECTOR (TARGET)	VALUATION
JANUARY	S4 Capital's Mediamonks	Tomorrow	Creative Agency	
	S4 Capital's Mightyhive	Metric Theory	Performance Marketing Agency	
	Shamrock Capital	Bayard Advertising	Recruitment Marketing	
	Shutterstock	Turbosquid	Digital Media Company	\$75 Million
	simpli.fi	The Advantage Software Company	ERP Software Developer	
	Stagwell's Code & Theory	Kettle	Digital Agency	
	Stella Point Capital	Velir	Digital Agency	Investment
	The Next Practices Group (NPG)	Bliss Integrated Communication	Marketing Communications Firm	Investment
	Thoughtworks	Gemini Solutions	Consulting Firm	
	Two Circles	Sports Ink	Ticketing & Hospitality Agency	
FEBRUARY	W20	IPM.ia	AI and Machine Learning Services	
	W20	Swoop	Healthcare Data and AI Company	
	Accenture	Edenhouse	Digital Consultancy	
	Accenture	Imaginea	Cloud Engineering Firm	
	Accenture	Infinity Works	Digital Consultancy	
	Ad Practitioners	Knoq	Technology & Data Startup	
	Amazon	Selz	E-commerce Platform	
	App Radar	TheTool	App Marketing Company	
	AppLovin	Adjust	Mobile Measurement Startup	\$1.0 Billion
	Automattic	Parse.ly	Analytics Company	
	Centre Lane Partners	Synacor	Private Investment Firm	\$92.0 Million
	Centro	QuanticMind	Predictive Advertising Technology	
	Cision	Brandwatch	Marketing and PR Agency	\$450.0 Million

Q1 2021 deals

For more information about individual transactions, click on the buyer's name.

FEBRUARY

BUYER	TARGET	SECTOR (TARGET)	VALUATION
ClickDimensions	Eletype	Martech Company	
Deloitte	The Working Group (TWG)	Cloud Consultant	
Dept	Byte	Marketing Technology	
Digital Media Solutions (DMS)	Aimtell/Pushpros	Tech and AI Infrastructure	
emids	Macadamian	Software Engineering Firm	
Fimalac Group's Jellyfish	Seelk	Software and Consultancy	
Fimalac Group's Jellyfish	Data Runs Deep	Consultant for Data Solutions	
Fimalac Group's Jellyfish	Quill	Performance Content	
Fimalac Group's Jellyfish	Splash	Creative Technology and Services	
Fimalac Group's Jellyfish	Webedia Brand Services	Gamification, Content & Tech Services	
Fiverr	Working Not Working	Freelance Platform	
Havas Group	BLKJ	Creative Agency	
Havas Group	Inbar Merhav G Ltd	Full Service Agency	
iHeartMedia	Triton Digital	Audio Media Tech Firm	\$230.0 Million
IMC	StackCommerce	E-Commerce Platform	
Investcorp	KSM Consulting	Consultancy	Majority Stake
K2 Partnering Solutions	The Crevalle Group	Cloud Consulting	
LiveRamp	DataFleets	Tech Company	\$68.0 Million
Magnite	RTL Group's SpotX	AdTech	\$1.17 Billion
Publicis Groupe UK	Octopus Group	Advertising Agency	
Superheroes Group	Union Media	Video Technology Providers	
Trendline Interactive	Data Insight Group (DiG)	Data & Analytics	
Univision	Vix	Ad-Supported Streaming Service	

Q1 2021 deals

For more information about individual transactions, click on the buyer's name.

MARCH	BUYER	TARGET	SECTOR (TARGET)	VALUATION
	Walmart	Thunder	Ad Tech Solution	
	WPP	DTI Digital	Digital Innovation Company	
	Acceleration Partners	R.O.EYE	Performance Marketing Agency	
	Accenture	Cirrus	Talent Consultancy	
	Accenture	Cygni	Cloud Developer	
	Accenture	fable+	Consulting Firm	
	Accenture	Pollux	Industrial Robotics and Automation	
	Accenture	REPL Group	Technology Consultancy	
	Amplifi	Comma Group	Data Management Consultant	
	Atmosera	Wintellect	Software Development	
	Avionos	Objectware	eCommerce Consultancy	
	BDO USA	DemandGen	Martech Company	
	Bruin Sports Capital	TGI Sport	Sports Technology, Media & Marketing	\$100.0 Million Investment
	ByteDance	Moonton	Game Developer	\$4.0 Billion
	Connelly Partners	VRX Studios	Content Agency	
	Fingerpaint	Leaderboard Branding	Branding Agency	Strategic Investment
	Gen3 Marketing	Optimus Performance Marketing	Performance Marketing Agency	
	Global Blue	ZigZag Global	E-commerce Platform	
	Globant	CloudShift	Salesforce Partner	
	H.I.G	HIBU	Digital Marketing	
	Hitachi	GlobalLogic	Digital Engineering Services	
	Impact	Trackonomics	Supply-Side Platform (SSP)	
	Infostretch	Saggezza	Digital Tech and Consulting Firm	
	Intermediate Capital Group (ICG)	Lucid Group	Healthcare Communications Company	Investment

Q1 2021 deals

For more information about individual transactions, click on the buyer's name.

	BUYER	TARGET	SECTOR (TARGET)	VALUATION
MARCH	LeadMD	Trendline Interactive	Marketing Agency	
	Lippe Taylor Group	Cheer Partners	Employee Experience & Communications Agency	
	Meltwater B.V.	Linkfluence	SaaS Company	\$59.0 Million
	MSQ	MBA	Digital Agency	
	News Corp	O'Neil Capital Management's Investor Business Daily	Digital & Print Magazine	\$275.0 Million
	Operative	STAQ	Ad Tech Company	
	Optimizely	Zaius	Customer Data Platform	
	Precision Value & Health	Across Health	Engagement Consultancy	
	Publicis Groupe	Balance Internet	Enterprise Grade Commerce Solutions	
	S4 Capital's Mediamonks	Jam3	Design & Experience Agency	
	Serata Capital Partners	Fusion92	Digital Marketing	
	Spotify	Betty Labs	Streaming Platform	
	Sun Capital Partners	Exadel	Software Development	
	Tinuiti	Ortega Group	Amazon Specialist Agency	
	Traject	Sendible	Social Media Management Platform	
	Upland Software	BlueVenn	Cloud-based Customer Data Platform	
	Vice Media Group's Virtue	Pltfrmr	Creative Consultancy	
	Vista Equity Partners	TripleLift	Programmatic Platform	\$1.40 Billion Majority Stake
	Waterland Private Equity	Sideshow Group	Digital Agency Group	Investment
	WPP's Wunderman Thompson	NN4M	Mobile Commerce Specialist	
	Yum Brands	Kvantum's AI Business	AI Business	
	Yum Brands	Tictuk Technologies	Marketing Technology	
Q1 Total = 115 Deals				

[Contact]



McCracken Advisory Partners
mccrackenap.com

Keith McCracken
Minneapolis
CEO & Co-Founder
+1 952 922 8140 or;
+1 612 203 6003
keith@mccrackenap.com

Ronnie Cohen
New York
Co-Founder
+1 908 347 1012
ronnie@mccrackenap.com

Rogério Campos
Sao Paulo
Regional Partner, Brazil
+55 11 984667000
rogerio@mccrackenap.com

McCracken AP Transactions

STONEARCH

Acquired by

FISHAWACK
HEALTH

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

JUST
global

Acquired

enigma

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

SunSpeed

Acquired by

ADVANTAGE
SOLUTIONS

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS



Marshall

Acquired by

twoxfour

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

dc°

Has Acquired

A2G

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

IRIS

Has Acquired

89DEGREES
Enabling Customer Engagement

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

Advisory Services
provided to

peppercomm

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

VISION7
INTERNATIONAL

Acquired

11
Eleven

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

PERISCOPE®

Acquired

anthem
marketing solutions™

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

LeadDog
MARKETING GROUP

Strategic Consulting

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

ZAMBEZI

Advised on Management Buyout

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

LEWIS^{PR}

Acquired

PISTON COMMERCE
CULTURE
TECHNOLOGY

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

plastic

Acquired by

HAVAS

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

RESOURCE

Acquired

AMMIRATI

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

iris

Acquired a majority interest in

router

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

Q1 2021

McCracken Advisory Partners - M&A in Advertising, Marketing Services & Marketing Technologies

McCracken AP Transactions

LEWIS^{PR}

Acquired



MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

LEWIS^{PR}

Acquired

purestone.

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

Atomic^{PR}

Acquired by

HUNTSWORTH

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

speakTECH
Interactive Design & Technology

Acquired by

Perficient®

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

LEWIS^{PR}

Acquired



MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

LEWIS^{PR}

Acquired

LEADS UNITED
Communication with an edge

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

*** GROUND ZERO**

Acquired by



MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

globalbeach...

Acquired by

speakTECH
Interactive Design & Technology

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

lunchbox™
Shopper Engagement Solutions

Acquired by

J W T

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS

LEWIS^{PR}

Acquired

davies murphy group
dmg.

MCCRACKEN ADVISORY PARTNERS