

2017 Top M&A Providers

Q&A BY JULIA PAULUS OGILVIE

For entrepreneurs, buying a business and selling a business are two of the most important aspects of ownership. The following providers have proven their dedication to the success of small businesses in St. Louis and have been named this year's top M&A providers.

Brad Crandall

Affinity Law Group LLC

Years of experience: 16 years

What are the challenges facing business owners when it comes to M&A?

It's a competitive M&A market right now with serious players involved. Many entrepreneurs and owners of private companies have done an amazing job growing and operating their business over the years, which is why they are in a position to sell. But most likely they will only sell a business once. The sale process is naturally outside their sweet spot, which is difficult for successful businesspeople to handle sometimes. It's important that owners keep running their business like they do best and team up with professional advisers that they trust to do what we do best and lead them through the sale process.



What is the No. 1 piece of advice you would give to business owners, either those about to purchase a business or an owner selling his or her business?

Whether you're buying or selling, be patient. Our most successful M&A clients are those who take their time to make sure they get the (overall) deal they desire and if not, are willing to walk away. Deals take time, so don't fall victim to the other party's often-arbitrary deadlines. The other party likely wants the deal as much as you do and is not going anywhere so long as progress is being made. If you don't feel like you're in control or feel like you are chasing the deal, then typically that means the other party is winning on this key issue.

What is the current environment for M&A activity?

This is about as robust an M&A market for middle-market private companies as I've seen in the (last) decade since we started Affinity. It's the effect of a combination of plenty of equity available from potential hungry buyers, good access to reasonably priced debt financing and some really strong companies for sale as more and more of the baby boomer generation continues to look for an exit strategy. It's a great alignment of forces for a deal-junkie like me.