

The State of the Deal: 2026

Both sides of the table

SaaS, Agencies, AI & Everything In Between

AUGUST 2026

HOSTED BY ANDREW GAZDECKI & RAINIER NANQUIL

FOR BUYERS

Sourcing verified SaaS opportunities, performing due diligence, and acquiring tech companies.

FOR SELLERS

Optimizing valuation, preparing financials, and navigating the acquisition process to close.

FOUNDER & CEO

Andrew Gazdecki

ACQUIRE.COM

Serial SaaS Entrepreneur

Built and sold multiple companies before building Acquire.com — the largest marketplace for bootstrapped SaaS.

Proven Acquisition Expert

Has facilitated over \$1B in acquisitions and seen every deal type, every founder mistake, and every outcome.



M&A ADVISOR

Rainier Nanquil

ACQUIRE.COM

Deep M&A Expertise

Rainier is an M&A advisor with 12+ years across acquisitions, capital markets, and investment sales.

Stellar Advisory Record

Before Acquire.com, he held advisory roles at Empire Flippers, Cushman & Wakefield, and Marcus & Millichap.



AGENDA

What We'll Cover Today

1

The State of the Market

Where SaaS, agency, and every other category stand right now



2

How to Prepare to Sell

Turning that checklist into a plan, whichever side you are on



3

How It Actually Works

The real process and timeline, start to close



4

What Buyers Want

The checklist buyers are actually using in 2026



5

SaaS, Agency & Beyond

Why SaaS leads, agencies are close behind, and what else we support



6

Live Deals

Review live listings on Acquire.com



PLATFORM METRICS

By the Numbers

500K+

Verified buyers
on platform

\$1B+

In deals facilitated

2,000+

Successful acquisitions

60–90

Avg. days from list to close

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Identity Verified

Every seller is identity-verified before listing goes live.

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NDA-Gated Access

NDA-gated access means you only see serious sellers.

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Connected Financials

Financial metrics connected directly, no fudged spreadsheets.

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Acquire Team Guidance

Guided by Acquire team, available for deals over \$1M ARR.

Profitability Is King

A clear shift in how buyers price a business.

PROFIT MULTIPLES

Buyers focus here. They want a business that is thriving, the name of the game is capital efficiency and profitability.



REVENUE MULTIPLES

Justifying a revenue multiple without a really high growth rate is hard to do. Pricing outside how the market speaks lowers your odds of success.



VALUATION RANGE BY CATEGORY

SaaS

3–5x Profit
or 1–3x Rev

Ecommerce

2–4x Profit
or 1–2x Rev

Marketplace

2–3x Profit
or 1–2x Rev

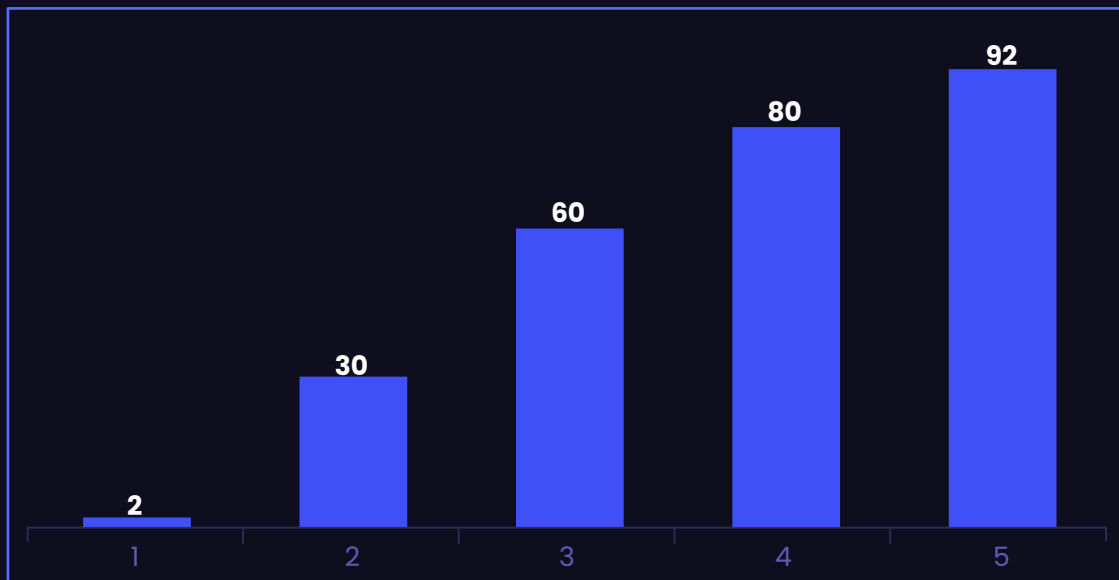
Agency

1–3x Profit
or 1–2x Rev

PRICE IT RIGHT, SELL IT FASTER

Finding the Pricing Sweet Spot

Asking price in relation to fair market value, plotted against serious buyer interest.



The takeaway

Overprice by 20 percent, and serious buyer interest drops to just 2 percent. Price 20 percent under fair market value, and it jumps to 92 percent.

Fair market value is the pivot point. Every point of overpricing costs real buyer interest.

Top 10

SELLER MYTHS VS. REALITY

✗ Growth alone sets my valuation.

- ✓ Profitability and retention matter just as much, often more, in this market.

✗ Price high and let buyers negotiate down.

- ✓ Overpricing kills serious buyer interest fast.

✗ The highest bid always wins.

- ✓ Sellers often choose the buyer they trust, not just the top number.

✗ I can organize my financials later.

- ✓ Unprepared sellers lose leverage the moment diligence starts.

✗ AI makes my SaaS less valuable.

- ✓ A clear AI narrative, either using it or defensible against it, strengthens offers.

✗ My business is too small for real buyers.

- ✓ The under-\$150K tier has some of the deepest buyer demand on the platform.

✗ A revenue multiple is always the right lens.

- ✓ Most buyers focus on profit multiples; revenue needs real growth to justify it.

✗ I need a broker to get a good outcome.

- ✓ Direct buyer access with guided support gets you there without broker markup.

✗ Selling takes a year or more.

- ✓ A well-prepared listing is commonly in LOI within 60 days.

✗ Buyers will understand I am founder-dependent.

- ✓ Founder-dependent ops get discounted. Documentation converts risk into value.

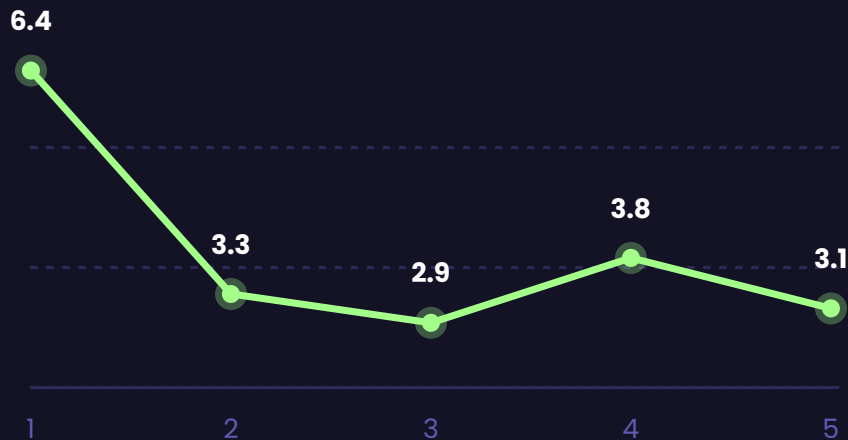
INDUSTRY CONTEXT · SOURCED

Here Is the Real Trend on Multiples

Private SaaS deal multiples, 2021 to 2026. Source: Aventis Advisors, SaaS Valuation Multiples 2015–2026.

The correction was real, and it is largely over.

The market bottomed around 2024 and has since found a more rational floor. Sellers anchored to 2021 pricing are negotiating against a market that no longer exists. Buyers waiting for another crash may be waiting for a market that already found its bottom.



VALUATION INSIGHTS

How to justify a higher multiple?

FINANCIAL & GROWTH DRIVERS

- ✓ High profit margin
- ✓ High YOY growth
- ✓ Low churn
- ✓ Large TAM

OPERATIONAL & BRAND ASSETS

- ★ High product use
- ★ Multiple years in business
- ★ Strategic partnerships
- ★ Dominant brand

"Understand how buyers value your business and price within a range that is reasonable"

FOR BUYERS

Why This Is a Great Time to Buy



Entry points are more accessible.

Lower multiples mean the same capital buys more real, cash-flowing business than it did in 2021.



The market rewards discipline now.

Rational pricing favors buyers who do the work, not the ones who chase hype.



Sellers are pricing to reality.

Fewer standoffs over 2021-era expectations means smoother negotiations and faster closes.



You are buying proven businesses.

Every acquisition comes with years of product iteration and customer relationships already done.

The best time to buy is when the market has reset and the sellers are ready. That time is now.

FOR SELLERS

Why This Is a Great Time to Sell



You get to build what is next.

Whether an AI-native idea, a new challenge, or a real break, closing this chapter frees you up.



A smaller multiple is still a win.

Years of cash flow already in your pocket, plus proceeds now, plus your time back, often adds up.



Real buyers are ready right now.

500K+ verified buyers are actively browsing today. The demand is not hypothetical, it is live.



Your proceeds fund the next build.

Many sellers roll this into a roll-up, a new AI-native venture, or their next acquisition.

The market did not take your options away. It just gave you a good reason to use them.

How Deals Are Actually Structured

FROM THE BUYER'S SIDE OF THE TABLE

Full Cash at Close

Maximum seller confidence. You get clean handoff, no ongoing obligations. Best for businesses with verified, stable revenue. Watch: highest upfront capital.

Earnout

Pay a portion based on future performance. Lowers upfront cost and aligns seller incentive to transition well. Watch: disputes can happen on metrics.

Seller Financing

Seller carries a note - you pay over time. Useful if you want to preserve cash and seller has high conviction. Watch: creates ongoing relationship.

Equity Rollover

Seller retains a minority stake. They stay invested in the outcome. Works well when seller has a network that helps growth. Watch: alignment must be documented.

Most deals blend structures. Define your preferred structure before entering negotiations.

New: SBA Financing Support

Introducing Franchable! Helping buyers and sellers navigate SBA financing earlier in the transaction.

FOR SELLERS

Get your business SBA-ready before a buyer shows up.

- ✓ SBA eligibility screening
- ✓ Lender-grade financial projections
- ✓ Review of historical P&Ls and tax returns
- ✓ Lender packaging and pre-qualification
- ✓ Financing guidance through closing

FOR BUYERS

Know whether you are financeable before you get far down the road.

- ✓ Buyer financial qualification
- ✓ Lender matching
- ✓ SBA loan preparation
- ✓ Underwriting support
- ✓ Term sheets through closing

The goal: *identify financing issues early, qualify buyers effectively, and move deals toward closing.*

SBA Requirements to Screen Early

Key requirements Franchable recommends before signing an LOI.

BUYERS

Citizenship: 100% of owners (direct and indirect) must be U.S. citizens or nationals

Capital: 10% minimum equity injection, plus post-close liquidity

Financial package: PFS, 3 years personal returns, 3 months bank statements, resume

Experience: background should match the operational risk of the business

SELLERS

U.S.-based: must meet SBA eligibility requirements

Financials: 3 years of business tax returns and P&Ls

Cash flow: minimum 1.25x coverage on proposed debt

Valuation: price supported by independent valuation

Transition: seller exits at close, then consulting

\$3M+: lender-ordered Quality of Earnings required

New SBA rules take effect October 1 (SOP 50 10 8.1).

[Applications filed by September 30 are underwritten under the current, more flexible standards.](#)

Let us know if you want to explore SBA financing

What buyers want, and where to focus.

The Playbook

02

PROFILES ON
ACQUIRE.COM

Which Profile Are You?

FOR BUYERS

The Operator



Wants to run the business day to day.

\$50K–\$500K ARR

The Portfolio Acquirer



Builds a machine from several small buys.

\$10K–\$100K ARR

The Strategic Buyer



Acquires for a specific thesis, pays a premium.

Strong customer overlap

FOR SELLERS

The Ready-to-Exit Founder



Wants a clean handoff and certainty of close.

Documented operations

The Portfolio Trimmer



Selling one business to focus on the rest.

Sub-\$200K ARR, simple structure

The Strategic Exit Seller



Positioned to negotiate a premium.

Proprietary data or relationships

THE ACQUISITION CHECKLIST

What Buyers Want, and How to Prepare

WHAT BUYERS WANT



Predictable MRR / ARR

Net revenue retention above 90 percent, low churn, clear cohort data.



Founder-Independent Ops

The business runs without you. Document everything, or expect a discount.



Clean Financials

P&L, bank statements, and metrics, 24 months minimum, fully auditable.



An AI Narrative

Either you use AI to improve margins, or you are defensible against it.



A Growth Signal

Flat is fine. Declining is priced in. Growing gets multiple expansion.

HOW TO PREPARE



Document your retention story

Pull your MRR trend and cohort data together before a buyer asks for it.



Write down every process

An undocumented business gets discounted. A documented one does not.



Get 24 months audit-ready

Clean financials before you list beat scrambling once a buyer is interested.



Decide your AI story now

Buyers will ask either way. Have a clear, honest answer ready.



Track your growth trend

Even modest, consistent growth strengthens your multiple. Show the line.

OUR SWEET SPOT

SaaS: The Strongest Category on the Platform

• 71% average margin

FOR BUYERS

- ✓ Proprietary data and workflow lock-in are moats large language models cannot replicate overnight.
- ✓ AI coding tools let a new owner ship the backlog and clear debt fast, often solo.
- ✓ The deepest inventory and steadiest multiples of any category, with the fastest path to close.

FOR SELLERS

- ✓ Your proprietary data and workflow lock-in are exactly what buyers pay a premium for.
- ✓ AI lets buyers pick up your codebase with confidence, meaning fewer stalled deals for you.
- ✓ The deepest buyer pool of any category means more offers and a faster path to close.

STRONG PERFORMER

Agency: Built on Recurring Revenue

Most deals close in 60–90 days

FOR BUYERS

- ✓ Client contracts and renewal history give you immediate, proven cash flow from day one.
- ✓ Niche expertise and trust take years to build, and a new entrant cannot buy the relationship.
- ✓ AI absorbs the reporting and research grind, so you can focus on the relationships that drive growth.

FOR SELLERS

- ✓ Your client relationships and renewal history are the single biggest driver of buyer interest.
- ✓ Deep niche expertise in a trust-heavy field is hard for a buyer to walk away from.
- ✓ Documented AI use in your operations reads as a margin lever buyers can expand on immediately.

THE TRENDING FORCE ACROSS EVERY DEAL

AI Is Reshaping Every Deal

The single biggest swing factor in buyer interest today

FOR BUYERS

- ✓ AI-enabled products, with AI layered on a real core workflow, are selling at strong multiples right now.
- ✓ AI coding assistants let a lean or non-technical buyer maintain and extend software that once needed a full team.
- ✓ AI absorbs the operational grind, freeing you to focus on growth and relationships from day one.

FOR SELLERS

- ✓ Businesses with AI already built into the workflow are drawing strong multiples right now.
- ✓ Documenting where AI has improved your margin gives buyers a credible growth story to act on.
- ✓ AI lets buyers move through diligence faster, which shortens your time on market.

AI is one of Acquire's fastest-growing categories

Last 12 complete months vs prior 12 months • Pacific time

+336%

Submitted

+115%

Listed

+225%

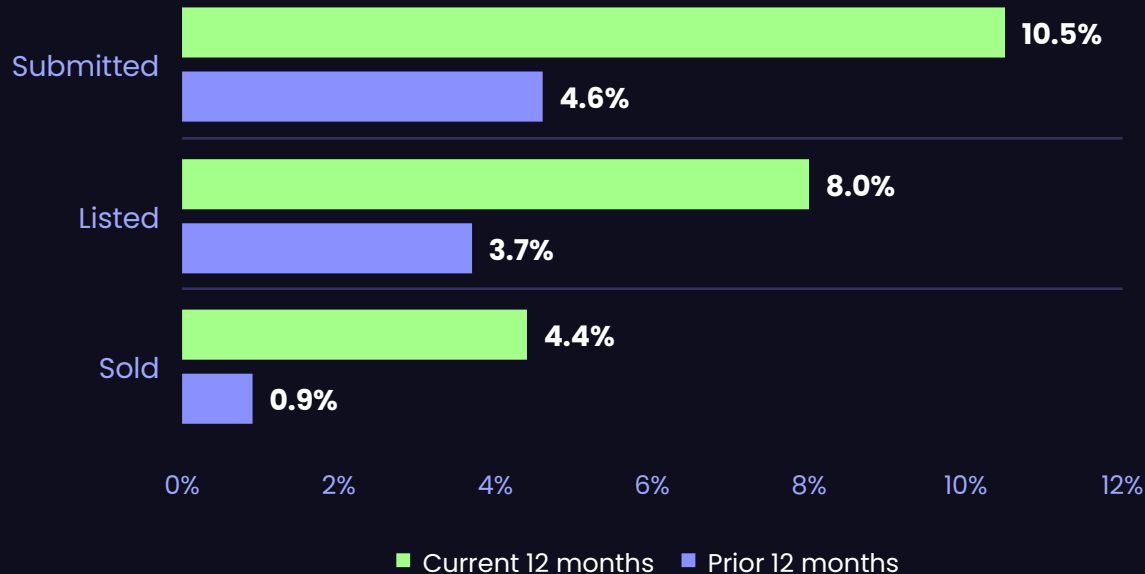
Sold

Supply is leading the story

AI now represents 10.5% of submissions
and 8.0% of new listings.

AI's marketplace share more than doubled

Share of all non-test startups · current 12 months vs prior 12 months



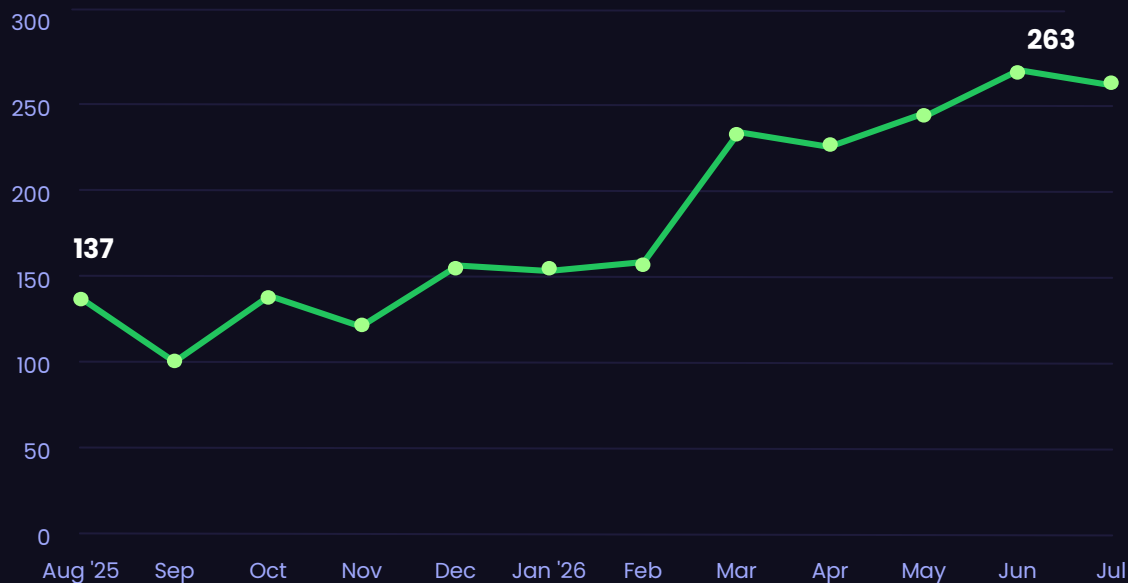
10.5%

of all submissions

up from 4.6%
in the prior year

AI submission momentum accelerated in 2026

Monthly AI submissions · August 2025–July 2026



+72%

higher monthly average

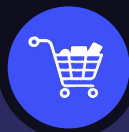
231 per month
vs 135 in the first half

The last five months each exceeded 225 submissions.

BEYOND SAAS AND AGENCY

We Also Help With

Every category below is actively bought and sold on Acquire.com.



Ecommerce

OWNED CUSTOMER DATA AND
SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS

BUYERS

A lean team can run a real brand,
with AI handling testing and support.

SELLERS

First-party lists and exclusive terms
buyers cannot replicate overnight.



Marketplace & Platform

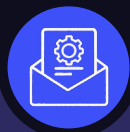
TWO-SIDED LIQUIDITY AND TRUST
INFRASTRUCTURE

BUYERS

Newly efficient to run with AI-driven
matching and support.

SELLERS

Hard-won liquidity is a premium
buyers pay for.



Newsletter

OWNED DISTRIBUTION AND
EDITORIAL VOICE

BUYERS

A realistic one-person operation,
with AI supporting research.

SELLERS

A founder-controlled list, independent
of any algorithm change.



Mobile Apps

APP STORE RANKING AND
HABITUAL DAILY USE

BUYERS

AI coding assistants make ongoing
maintenance realistic.

SELLERS

Accumulated ranking and ratings
are slow for anyone to replicate.

SIX CATEGORIES, TWO SIDES OF THE TABLE

At a Glance

Category	The Moat	For Buyers	For Sellers
SaaS	Workflow lock-in	multiple held; ship the backlog fast	Deepest buyer pool, fastest close
Agency	Client retainers + trust	Proven cash flow from day one	Recurring revenue draws fast offers
Ecommerce	Owned customer data	A lean owner can run a real brand	Documented data appeals to more buyers
Marketplace & Platform	Two-sided liquidity	Trust scales without headcount	Hard-won liquidity is a premium
Newsletter	Owned distribution list	One owner can sustain the cadence	A clean, founder-controlled asset
Mobile Apps	Habitual daily use	Lean buyers can maintain and extend it	Ranking and ratings are hard to replicate

The real process, start to close.

How It Works

03

FROM FIRST MESSAGE TO CLOSE

FROM FIRST MESSAGE TO CLOSE

How It Works on Acquire.com

FOR BUYERS

1

Create Profile & Browse

Set your criteria, get matched, sign NDAs for deeper access.

2

Reach Out & Submit LOI

Message the seller directly, then submit price, structure, and timeline.

3

Due Diligence

Data room access, typically 2 to 4 weeks for a clean business.

4

Close

Escrow, asset transfer, transition support from the seller.

FOR SELLERS

1

Get Verified & List

Connect your financials, highlight your moat, go live.

2

Field Interest & Review LOIs

Buyers sign NDAs; compare offers on price, structure, and timeline.

3

Manage Due Diligence

Data room access for your chosen buyer, 2 to 4 weeks typical.

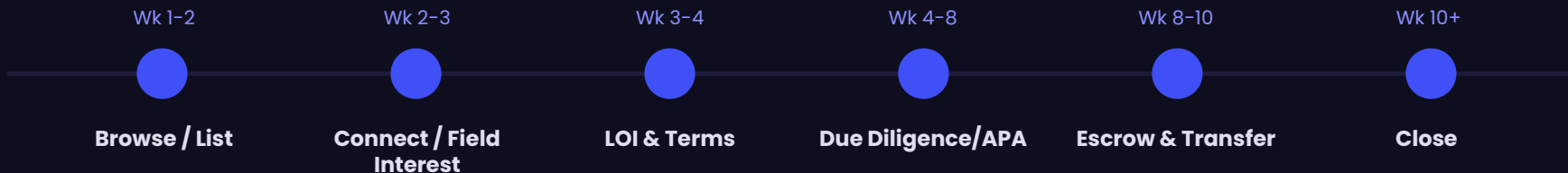
4

Close & Transition

Escrow, asset transfer, and as much transition support as you choose.

60-90 DAYS, EITHER SIDE OF THE TABLE

What a Timeline Looks Like



FOR BUYERS

- ✓ Have financing arranged before you submit an LOI, it builds seller confidence.
- ✓ Request a 30-day exclusivity window post-LOI to protect your diligence investment.

FOR SELLERS

- ✓ Have financials organized before you list, it speeds up offers.
- ✓ Offer a 30-day exclusivity window to your chosen buyer to keep momentum.

Real deals, listed now!

Live Listings Review

04

THE RUSH DOESN'T WAIT

Start today, whichever side of the table your on.

FOR BUYERS

Browse 1,000+ verified SaaS and agency listings. Sign NDAs. Make offers.

BROWSE ACQUIRE.COM →

FOR SELLERS

Get in front of 500K+ verified buyers.
Get verified. Get offers.

GET A FREE VALUATION →