



WHITE PAPER

WHERE DEALS AND DATA CONVERGE: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON M&A INTEGRATION

ABOUT 180OPS

180ops is a revenue intelligence platform that helps commercial leaders make better, faster decisions by turning complexity and uncertainty into clarity. We combine internal, external, and macroeconomic data to deliver boardroom-grade insights in a simple, human-centered experience.

THE BIG PICTURE

M&A promise growth, but the value often slips away in execution. Success depends on aligning people, plans, and data fast enough to drive results. This paper explores how smarter, data-driven decisions during post-merger integration can close the gap between potential and performance.

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INTRODUCTION

The M&A market is on the rise, with deal volumes expected to keep growing through 2025 and beyond. This surge is driven by stronger economic fundamentals and abundant capital, as noted by [McKinsey](#), [EY](#), and other industry leaders.

But with more deals comes greater pressure to get post-merger integration right. The reality is that between 70% and 90% of M&A transactions [fail](#) to hit their goals. This highlights the real risk of value erosion when integration lacks strategic discipline—a concern increasingly reflected in how dealmakers assess M&A [today](#).

Success now demands more than just aligning operations and cultures. It requires a data-driven approach that uncovers where true, lasting value lives. Revenue Intelligence sits at the core of this shift, combining account-level insights, customer behavior, market signals, and performance data to enable smarter, faster decisions through every integration phase.

This white paper focuses squarely on the post-merger integration challenge. Drawing on insights from seasoned industry leaders and the latest research, it offers a practical framework for turning M&A ambitions into real, sustainable value.

In a market primed for growth, mastering integration is no longer optional; it's essential for driving lasting competitive advantage.

THE INTEGRATION GAUNTLET: WHERE VALUE IS WON OR LOST

M&A deals often begin with strategic optimism and synergy forecasts. But the real test comes post-close, when two companies must operate as one. This is where many deals stumble—not due to bad strategy, but failed execution. Among the most prominent of these challenges are the complexities surrounding cultural integration, the intricacies of merging disparate IT systems, and the often-elusive pursuit of revenue synergies.

THE CULTURE CLASH

Merging cultures isn't about blending differences. It's about designing a future that respects both legacies while confronting incompatibilities head-on. **Jan-Erik (Oppo) Nyrövaara, co-founder & CEO at 180ops**, has been on both sides of the table during M&A. He explains:

“Often, companies don’t discover that mixing two vastly different cultures cannot happen overnight. For example, you might have one company that is product-focused, and another who concentrates on R&D. Their communication styles, priorities, values, and understanding of what constitutes success can be worlds apart. The friction feels constant. This type of fundamental cultural mismatch can derail any potential synergies the deal was supposed to create.”

Industry research consistently identifies cultural incompatibility as a major contributor to M&A underperformance, and the risk is losing high performers, having a messy and prologned integration, and eventually, a failure to capture merger value and synergies, according to [McKinsey](#).

Adding to this, [Harvard Business Review](#) states that a successful M&A requires a transformational approach that prioritizes cultural integration to achieve value beyond financial consolidation.

Leeni Harmainen, CMO at 180ops, states that in her experience, cultural gaps exacerbated by poor transparency and unclear value propositions can directly erode morale and retention. It's clear: cultural integration isn't a side task. It's foundational to value creation.

THE IT INTEGRATION MAZE

The scale and complexity of IT integration are often underestimated. **Petri Malmelin, co-founder of Ämplify**, which assists businesses with complex transformations, warns that the systems themselves aren't the only challenge—it's the data within them that matters.

Without proper planning, IT integration delays disrupt operations and obscure visibility into customers, projects, and performance.

Leeni Harmainen recalls that during her M&A experience, misaligned systems increased administrative work, forcing employees to navigate multiple platforms and slowing productivity.

When IT is treated as a strategic lever, not a back-office function, it accelerates integration and enables synergy. [Forbes](#) notes that proactive IT planning can eliminate redundancies, safeguard data, and unify operations.

THE REVENUE SYNERGY MIRAGE

Cost synergies are usually modeled in detail. But top-line growth? That's often more aspirational than actionable.

Katri M. Silander, advisor in post-merger cultural integration and commercial transformation, builds on this idea, stating:

“The illusion of quick revenue wins post-merger often collapses under the weight of siloed data, unaligned teams, and under-resourced integration planning. Capturing top-line synergies demands more than a unified GTM strategy—it requires cross-functional behavioral change and long-term commitment.”

[Bain & Company](#) cites these unrealized synergies as the top reason deals fail. **Petri Malmelin** and his **Ämplify co-founder Lauri Eskola** stress that aligning product, marketing, and sales around a new go-to-market model is a 3–5 year effort, often omitted from initial plans.

Capturing revenue synergies requires more than ambition. It demands integrated data, aligned incentives, and shared visibility from day one. Because without data clarity, synergy goals stay theoretical, and integration risks becoming just another missed opportunity.

DATA-DRIVEN INTEGRATION: ILLUMINATING THE PATH TO SYNERGY REALIZATION

Access to accurate, timely data is foundational to successful post-merger integration. Without it, companies struggle to see the full picture of the combined entity, making it difficult to act decisively or realize synergies.

[McKinsey](#) and [Deloitte](#) consistently highlight data integration as a critical success factor in M&A. When done right, it enables visibility across operations, fuels strategic insight, and supports cultural alignment: three pillars of lasting value creation. But these benefits don't happen automatically. In reality, most teams begin with fragmented systems, siloed metrics, and limited cross-functional visibility.

“Each team is working in their own environment, with their own KPIs. But the business needs one shared space for making decisions; one place to align.”

—Kimmo Vilske, Partner, Corporate Finance & Board Member, PwC

RAPID VISIBILITY: ONE VIEW OF THE COMBINED ENTITY

For integration to succeed, leaders need a clear, unified view of the business. Yet M&A often brings multiple CRMs and ERPs, each holding fragments of customer and operational data.

Toni Keskinen, co-founder and CPO at 180ops, underscores the cost of this fragmentation:

“In an M&A multiple CRMs and ERPs mean you have to get different pieces of the puzzle from various systems to gain even a basic understanding of a single customer’s relationship with your entire organization. This lack of a single source of truth slows everything down and makes it incredibly difficult to identify immediate opportunities or potential risks.”

A centralized data strategy is essential. Without it, decisions are based on partial or outdated information, which delays action and diminishes confidence.

STRATEGIC INSIGHT: FROM DATA TO DECISIONS

The real value of integration lies not just in aggregating data but analyzing it to identify growth and optimization opportunities. **Petri Malmelin** explains:

“Companies must consider how they optimize their service and product portfolio in an optimal way. By analyzing sales data, customer feedback, and market trends from both entities, you can identify opportunities to streamline the portfolio, eliminate redundancies, and develop a more compelling and profitable offering for the combined customer base. These ‘silent indicators’ within the data, when combined and analyzed effectively, can provide invaluable insights that go beyond surface-level observations.”

Advanced analytics reveal what surface metrics miss. As [McKinsey](#) points out, these capabilities not only sharpen due diligence but also increase the accuracy of synergy forecasts—benefits that extend well beyond deal close.

CULTURAL ALIGNMENT: BUILDING SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Data also plays a critical role in aligning people. When employees across both legacy organizations work from the same trusted information, it fosters shared purpose, reduces friction, and creates a common foundation for collaboration.

Lauri Eskola, who has guided complex business transformations for over two decades, puts it plainly:

“Culture may sound like a soft topic, but it’s the hard part of transformation. As the saying goes, ‘The soft stuff is the hardest to get right.’ You need to make culture something that adds real business value to the transformation.”

One way to do that is through transparency. Shared data becomes a unifying force—grounding employees in the same customer needs, performance realities, and strategic priorities. **Lauri** continues:

“If everyone can look at the same data from key accounts regarding their values and needs, you create a more unified focus. This data-driven transparency can be a powerful tool in bridging cultural divides and fostering a more cohesive, customer-centric organization.”

[Research](#) supports the connection between data transparency and post-merger cultural integration. In this context, shared facts can be as powerful as shared values.

STRATEGIC PILLARS OF M&A SUCCESS: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR VALUE CREATION

The success of an M&A transaction is shaped long before the ink dries. Strategic clarity, human alignment, market vigilance, and decisive execution form the bedrock of value creation. Increasingly, companies are operationalizing these pillars through intelligent data platforms like 180ops, which provide the clarity and control needed to manage complexity and deliver on deal rationale.

Without a solid strategic framework, even well-executed integrations risk falling short. The following section explores four critical pillars that underpin successful M&A outcomes.

1. STRATEGY FIRST: DEFINING THE "WHY" BEHIND THE DEAL

A clearly defined acquisition strategy is more than helpful—it's essential. It sets the direction and filters decisions throughout the M&A journey. As **Kimmo Vilske** puts it:

"The key to mitigating the inherent risks of M&A transactions lies in having a clear strategy. By identifying the optimal acquisition targets based on that strategy, you ensure alignment with your core business goals, fostering a stronger integration foundation and increasing the likelihood of achieving the expected synergies."

Strategic clarity must be paired with rigorous due diligence to validate the investment thesis. [Research](#) consistently shows that strategic alignment—where the acquisition directly supports the buyer's core objectives—is strongly correlated with successful outcomes.

Yet even a strong strategy can stall without the ability to act on it. Platforms like 180ops help teams track progress against strategic objectives from day one, translating vision into execution. As [HBR](#) notes, strategic logic should extend beyond cost synergies to include sustainable value drivers like market expansion, innovation, or access to talent.

2. PEOPLE POWER: ENGAGING AND ALIGNING THE HUMAN ELEMENT

M&A is as much about people as it is about portfolios. Success depends on engaging, aligning, and retaining the right talent across both organizations. **Petri Malmelin** underscores this:

"The best business transformations and M&A integrations fundamentally change people's thinking and behavior. If you neglect the human element, you risk losing key talent, fostering resistance to change, and ultimately undermining the very synergies you are trying to achieve."

Effective change management through clear communication, two-way feedback, and a shared sense of purpose is essential. As **Lauri Eskola** says:

“The goal should be to build a new, shared organizational identity that resonates with employees from both sides, rather than simply imposing the culture of the acquirer.”

Katri M. Silander adds to this:

“Culture is a huge determinant of success or failure. Cultural integration isn’t about compromise or conformity; it’s about deliberately shaping a shared future that draws strength from diversity while acknowledging where tough choices must be made.”

3. EXTERNAL FOCUS: STAYING VIGILANT ON THE MARKET

Internal alignment is critical, but turning inward for too long is risky. Integration efforts often absorb so much focus that external realities—competitors, customers, and emerging trends—are overlooked. **Lauri Eskola** warns:

“Integrations are all-consuming, which takes the focus away from where it should be: on the external world, the customers, the emerging opportunities, and the competitive landscape.”

Losing sight of the market undermines the value you’re trying to create. Staying close to customers, monitoring competitors, and responding to market shifts is essential for maintaining momentum and positioning the new organization for long-term success. Doing this successfully calls for access to the right data—drive clarity through platforms like 180ops.

4. DECISIVE ACTION: SPEED AND CLARITY

Integration is inherently disruptive. To counter that, companies must act with urgency and clarity. Early wins build confidence, create momentum, and validate the deal.

As **Lauri Eskola** explains:

“If you don’t show fairly quickly that the effort is heading in a positive direction, you risk losing internal buy-in. Early wins with clear, tangible results are essential to reinforce the strategic rationale behind the deal and keep everyone aligned and motivated.”

But speed without insight is dangerous. That’s why many leaders are embedding real-time analytics platforms to [enable](#) fast, confident decisions rooted in reliable data. Unified views of customers, sales, and operations help teams act without hesitation, and without guesswork.

Clarity is just as important. **Leeni Harmainen** notes that a shared narrative, introduced early, helps unify teams and smooth the integration path. [HBR](#) research adds that early focus on preserving revenue, streamlining the organizational structure, and making swift calls in high-impact areas is key to overcoming resistance and building lasting momentum.

Even with strong early wins, integration remains complex. Aligning people, processes, and data requires discipline, transparency, and the right tools to bring strategy to life.

FROM COMPLEXITY TO CLARITY: THE ROLE OF REVENUE INTELLIGENCE PLATFORMS

The challenges of M&A—cultural friction, IT complexity, elusive synergies, and data chaos—demand more than traditional tools. They require a new class of solution: revenue intelligence platforms that deliver real-time, actionable insights by integrating internal and external data along with macroeconomic trends.

Traditional BI dashboards and CRM tools offer rearview-mirror visibility and often struggle to integrate disparate systems across merging entities. These tools weren't built to handle the operational and cultural convergence that M&A demands.

UNIFIED DATA INTEGRATION

Toni Keskinen previously emphasized the limitations of disparate systems. 180ops is built to connect and harmonize data from various sources, including CRM, ERP, marketing automation, and billing systems. This creates a single, unified view of the customer and the business across the newly merged entity, breaking down the silos that obscure critical information.

For example, post-merger sales teams often lack visibility into deal histories or active proposals from their counterpart teams. By harmonizing pipeline and billing data, 180ops prevents duplicate outreach, enables warm handoffs, and ensures unified messaging—something that's particularly critical during the first 90 days of post-merger when customer trust is most vulnerable.

“Data isn't a ‘nice to have’—it's a strategic necessity. It enables leadership to move beyond assumptions and design integration paths that resonate with people, not just processes.”

— Katri M. Silander

COMPREHENSIVE SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

By providing a holistic view of customer interactions, revenue streams, and operational performance across all entities, 180ops enables a level of situational awareness that is crucial for identifying cross-selling and upselling opportunities, as well as potential areas of overlap or conflict that need to be addressed post-merger.

It provides insights that go far beyond basic CRM data, allowing teams to align and understand what moves need to be made on key accounts, when, and why.

For revenue leaders, this situational awareness answers critical questions: *Which accounts are at risk? Where can we grow wallet share? Which teams are overperforming or underresourced?* These aren't just operational questions. They're strategic levers that determine whether the merged entity hits its revenue targets.

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS FOR INTEGRATION

Unlike traditional reporting tools that simply present data, 180ops is designed to give actionable insights. This includes identifying key customer segments across the combined entity, highlighting opportunities for revenue synergy realization, and flagging potential risks based on historical data and behavioral patterns.

Furthermore, you do not need to have the skills of a data analyst to understand how to take action—with Microsoft Copilot, any team member can receive written reports and summaries that show them the actions they need to take to continue driving growth.

Whether you're leading integration, managing key accounts, or driving revenue targets, 180ops delivers role-specific insights that help you act fast and stay aligned without needing to decode complex tools.

ENHANCED COLLABORATION AND CULTURAL ALIGNMENT

By providing a shared platform with consistent and reliable data, 180ops can foster better collaboration and a common understanding across teams from the merging entities. As **Lauri Eskola** suggested, a shared view of key customers and business priorities can contribute to building a unified culture focused on shared goals. With a single source of truth, priorities can be set based on data, helping to design the intentional future that a successful M&A requires.

Shared data builds shared trust. When teams see the same numbers, arguments shift from opinion to insight. This shared operational truth reduces friction between legacy orgs and accelerates cultural alignment—especially important when integration teams must make tough decisions quickly and transparently.

ACCELERATED INTEGRATION & VALUE REALIZATION

By providing rapid visibility and actionable insights, 180ops can help organizations accelerate the integration process, allowing them to identify and capitalize on synergy opportunities more quickly and mitigate potential risks more effectively, ultimately leading to faster value realization from the M&A transaction.

Industry benchmarks [suggest](#) that realizing revenue synergies typically takes 2–3 years. With platforms like 180ops accelerating visibility and alignment, integration teams can start generating measurable ROI in a fraction of that time. Early wins build confidence and momentum for the long road ahead.

CONCLUSION: MASTERING INTEGRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE M&A VALUE

Post-merger integration is no longer just the final step in a transaction. It is the execution of the deal thesis and the foundation for long-term value. Success depends on more than aligning operations; it requires clear direction, timely insights, and coordinated action across teams.

By proactively addressing the challenges of cultural alignment, IT integration, and revenue synergy realization with a strategic, data-informed, and people-centric approach, organizations can significantly increase their chances of achieving their desired outcomes.

With platforms like 180ops, integration leaders are better equipped to navigate complexity, act quickly, and stay focused on results. By connecting data across accounts, systems, and stakeholders, they can identify risks early, realize synergies faster, and drive sustained value from day one.

M&A success isn't gained by chance. It is achieved through disciplined execution, guided by the right intelligence.

CONTRIBUTORS



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A seasoned commercial advisor and transformation leader, Katri has a track record of driving revenue enablement, digitization, and go-to-market success across global industries and startups.



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Kimmo has specialized in M&A deal origination, execution, and financing for over 25 years, with a focus on the industrial products and energy and utilities sectors.



Petri Malmelin, Co-founder at Ämplify

An experienced transformation leader, Petri has led strategic planning and execution in multiple international M&As over a 30-year consulting career.



Lauri Eskola, Managing Director at Ämplify

With over 20 years of experience in leadership and consulting, Lauri's passion lies in assisting organizations through complex business transformations.



Leeni Harmainen, CMO at 180ops

Leeni worked as a Culture & People Experience Lead in an international design agency during its M&A by a global strategic consultancy, Capgemini.



Jan-Erik (Oppo) Nyrövaara, Co-founder & CEO at 180ops

With experience on both sides of the table in M&A, Oppo brings deep expertise in navigating growth, deal execution, and post-merger integration to build high-performing businesses.



Toni Keskinen, Co-founder & CPO at 180ops

Toni is a seasoned business leader with 25+ years of experience in customer experience, insights, and market intelligence for B2B companies.

ABOUT 180OPS

180ops is a revenue intelligence platform built for businesses that refuse to settle for data chaos. Whether you're navigating the turbulence of M&A or simply striving for sharper, more confident decisions, 180ops empowers your teams to see what others miss.

Our platform unifies internal and external data sources with macroeconomic trends, delivering real-time insights, actionable analytics, and always-on situational awareness. With 180ops, you don't just get a clearer picture—you discover the opportunities, risks, and connections hiding in plain sight.

180ops helps you transform uncertainty into clarity, so you can move faster, act smarter, and achieve more value at every stage of growth.

Learn more at 180ops.com