The Servicenow partner ecosystem

Market Research · September 2026

The reference gate ecosystem: 2,700 partners, six Global Elite, 97 verified acquisitions and a program rebuilt in 2026 to make the top of it harder to reach. Certified headcount is the asset.

Now, for tomorrow

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Executive Summary

ServiceNow is the cleanest example of a gate-phase partner ecosystem in enterprise software, and the one where vendor tier policy visibly created the scarcity that drives M&A. The program counts more than 2,700 partners with only six at Global Elite; in April 2026 it unified every program onto a five-tier ladder after retiring a points system under which almost everyone reached the top, freezing partner status and giving partners eighteen months to meet harder certified-headcount and outcome thresholds. Ninety-seven verified partner-firm acquisitions have closed, roughly 4 percent of the channel, with volume peaking at fourteen deals in both 2021 and 2024. Half the consulting population still sits below 100 employees. That combination — a thinned top, a fragmented base and a hard threshold — is why this ecosystem is the most actively consolidated services channel in the study.

2,700+

PARTNERS IN THE PROGRAM

Against roughly 1,300–2,200 consulting and implementation firms on the services-only count.

Six

GLOBAL ELITE PARTNERS

Including Accenture, Cognizant, Infosys, Deloitte and DXC. The scarcest accreditation in the ecosystem.

97

VERIFIED DEALS, 2015–25

Roughly 4% of the channel bought, peaking at fourteen deals in both 2021 and 2024.

~50%

CONSULTING PARTNERS UNDER 100 STAFF

With roughly 300 boutiques under 50 employees joining in a single year. This is the pipeline.

Five tiers

PROGRAM REBUILT APRIL 2026

Registered, Select, Premier, Elite, Global Elite — replacing a 37-area points system.

18 months

TO MEET THE NEW THRESHOLDS

Status frozen while partners hit harder certified-headcount and outcome bars.

Premium

SINGLE-VENDOR PURITY HERE

The exception to the concentration discount: pure-plays price highest because the buyer wants the bench.

23,000+

ACCENTURE SERVICENOW CERTIFICATIONS

Capacity concentrates in the GSIs; the long tail is certification-thin by comparison.

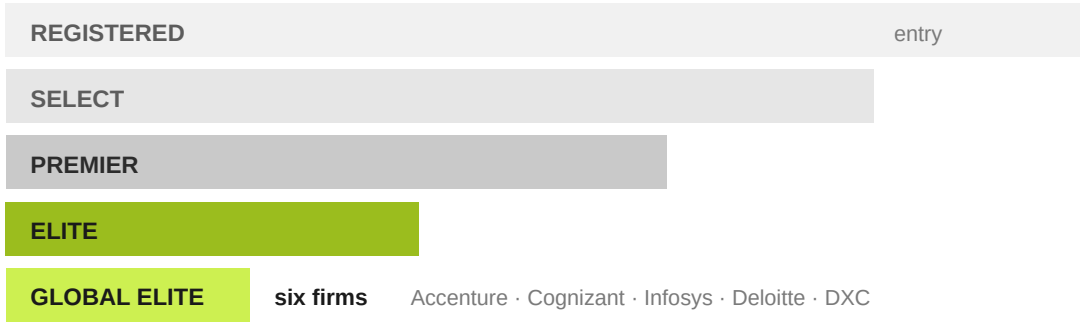
Sources: ServiceNow partner program data (2,700-plus partners, six Global Elite, five-tier ladder unified April 2026, 37-area points system retired, status frozen with an 18-month runway; consulting and implementation count ~1,300–2,200, Q4 2024); Aventis Advisors, 97 verified ServiceNow partner acquisitions 2015–2025; Accenture certification disclosure; all as cited in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026).

Scope & Definition

The unit of analysis is the partner firm, not ServiceNow and not the end customer. ServiceNow subscription revenue is out of scope. Two counts circulate for this ecosystem and they measure different things: roughly 1,300 to 2,200 consulting and implementation firms on a services-only basis, and more than 2,700 partners on the program-wide basis after the 2026 rebuild. The services figure is the one comparable with Salesforce's 3,400 consulting partners and Workday's 150 services firms. Neither is comparable with a hyperscaler's six-figure headline.

The five-tier ladder, unified April 2026

Replacing a 37-area points system in which almost every partner reached the top



WHAT THE REBUILD DID

ServiceNow retired the points system, froze partner status and gave partners eighteen months to meet harder certified-headcount and outcome thresholds. It had also nearly quadrupled its incentive and specialisation investment in January 2025. Each rationalisation mechanically shrinks the top of the program and sharpens the scarcity that pushes acquirers to buy capacity rather than build it.

Tier widths are illustrative of relative scarcity, not published firm counts.

In scope, by partner function

Resellers; global and regional systems integrators; implementation and configuration consultancies, **the prime buy-and-build target**; managed service partners running application management; ISV and technology partners building on the ServiceNow Store; training and enablement partners; and advisory firms.

Counting rules applied

- → **Two counts, two meanings.** The services-only figure (~1,300–2,200) and the program-wide figure (2,700-plus) are not interchangeable and must never be compared with hyperscaler headlines.
- → **Capacity is not count.** ServiceNow partners employed roughly 7.7 million professionals as of Q4 2024, but only a fraction hold ServiceNow certifications — Accenture alone reports over 23,000.
- → **Never sum across vendors.** The six Global Elite firms hold top-tier status in nearly every other program simultaneously.

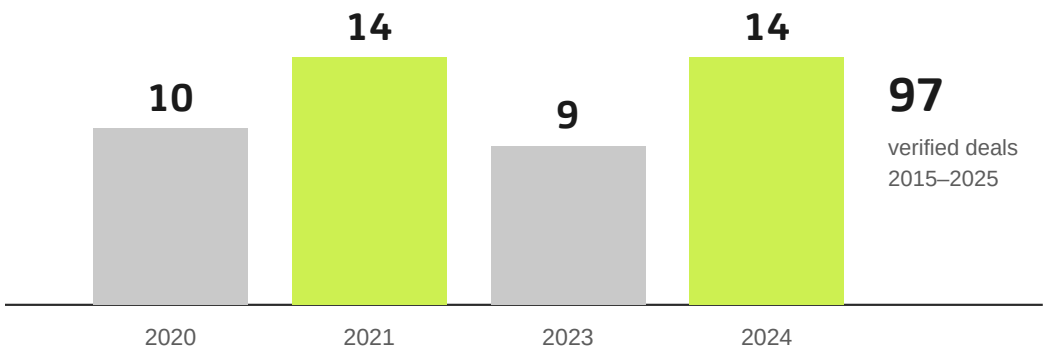
Sources: ServiceNow partner program structure and April 2026 five-tier unification; January 2025 incentive and specialisation investment increase; partner-capacity data (7.7 million professionals across the ecosystem, Q4 2024; Accenture 23,000-plus certifications); verified partner-count reference table in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026).

Size, Growth, Trends & Drivers

In a gate ecosystem, partner capacity grows faster than partner count, and ServiceNow is the case in point: certification thresholds rise while the firm population stays roughly flat, so the scarce resource is certified people rather than logos. The demand side compounds against that constraint. ServiceNow's platform growth has run above 20 percent, and the report's finding is blunt: partner talent cannot keep pace with it, which is precisely why acquirers pay premiums for certified teams rather than recruiting them.

Deal velocity: double digits since 2020

Verified ServiceNow partner-firm acquisitions per year, selected years



WHAT DRIVES THE CADENCE

Each tier rationalisation raises the certified-headcount bar, and every raise pushes acquirers to buy capacity rather than build it. Policy, not demand, sets the rhythm.

Four drivers a partner firm can price

- → **Certification scarcity, engineered.** The 2026 five-tier rebuild, the frozen status and the eighteen-month runway all shrink the top of the program. Scarce accreditation is an acquirable asset with a price.
- → **Platform growth outrunning talent.** Partner talent cannot keep pace with a platform growing above 20 percent, which is the mechanical reason certified teams command premiums.
- → **Agentic AI demand and displacement.** ServiceNow bought Moveworks for 2.85bn dollars, adding agentic AI and 500 specialists; Gartner projects 40 percent of enterprise applications will carry task-specific agents by end-2026. New implementation demand, and hour compression, in the same motion.
- → **Observability convergence.** The October 2025 Dynatrace collaboration on autonomous IT operations widens what a ServiceNow partner is expected to deliver beyond service management.

Sources: Aventis Advisors ServiceNow deal velocity (97 verified deals 2015–2025; double digits from 2020; fourteen in 2021 and 2024; nine in 2023); ServiceNow program rebuild and incentive data; ServiceNow / Moveworks USD 2.85bn (Mordor Intelligence); Dynatrace and ServiceNow collaboration (October 2025, MarketsandMarkets); Gartner agentic-AI projection; all as cited in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026).

Segmentation

ServiceNow is the ecosystem where the usual concentration rule inverts. Across IT services, single-vendor concentration is a discount — 0.5 to 1 turn above 25 to 30 percent and 1 to 2 turns above 35 percent — but in a scarce-certification gated program, purity is a premium, because the buyer is acquiring the certified bench itself rather than a diversified revenue stream. A ServiceNow Elite pure-play therefore prices above a comparably sized multi-platform generalist, and that inversion is the single most important segmentation fact in this deck.

A fragmented base under a thin top

ServiceNow consulting-partner population by employee band

~50%
under 100 employees

~300
boutiques under 50, one year's intake

Six
Global Elite

WHERE CAPACITY ACTUALLY SITS

Partners across the ecosystem employ roughly 7.7 million professionals, but only a fraction hold ServiceNow certifications. Accenture alone reports over 23,000 — so capacity concentrates in the GSIs while the long tail is certification-thin.

THE CONCENTRATION INVERSION

Elsewhere, single-vendor purity is a 0.5-to-2-turn discount. Here it is a premium, because the acquirer wants the scarce certified bench, not revenue diversification.

What each partner type is worth

EV / EBITDA, verified partner-firm transaction medians



THE ARBITRAGE

5–8x entry on sub-USD 3m EBITDA specialists

10–14x on the platform they fold into

Scale alone is worth six turns: 6.7x below USD 5m EV, 12.7x above USD 500m.

Sources: ServiceNow consulting-partner size distribution (~half under 100 employees; ~300 boutiques under 50 joining in a single year); partner-capacity data (7.7 million professionals, Q4 2024; Accenture 23,000-plus certifications); Aventis Advisors subsector and deal-size medians and the IT-services concentration-discount convention; all as cited in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026).

End-Users

ServiceNow's buyer is the large, risk-averse enterprise, and in this ecosystem the partner tier functions as a legitimacy signal more explicitly than anywhere else. Stated buying criteria are cost, functional fit and references; revealed criteria are risk reduction, certified depth and speed to value. A bank weights the Global Elite badge and the certification count heavily because it de-risks a board decision; a mid-market buyer ignores both and buys on fixed-fee predictability. A partner firm's revenue mix by buyer profile therefore prices its certifications.

Highest

Regulated enterprise

BFSI, healthcare, pharma, insurance. Compliance, audit and sovereignty demand certified partners and documented controls. **Weights the tier badge most heavily of any buyer.**

Mandatory

Public sector & federal

Clearance, sovereignty and physical-presence certification make onshore delivery compulsory. Federal-focused contractors form a distinct group in this ecosystem.

Programme

Large commercial

Retail, CPG, manufacturing, telecom. Buys multi-module workflow programmes on vertical depth, accelerators and speed to value.

No bench

Mid-market

Holds no platform-specialist headcount. Buys fixed-fee predictability and single accountability from the boutique tail.

Out of scope

SMB

Largely not a ServiceNow buyer at all — which is why this channel has no marketplace-led reseller economy of the kind that dominates the hyperscalers.

Certification is the sales asset

Go-to-market for regulated and federal buyers sells the badge, the certification count and the compliance record, with onshore delivery as table stakes — Accenture's 23,000-plus certifications being the reference example. Certified headcount is a revenue driver, not a cost line.

Pricing logic is moving

Value-based firms grew 8.7 percent against 2.1 percent for time-based, and buyers increasingly refuse to pay for hours AI has removed. Partner-firm retention benchmarks are not publicly disclosed with rigour; that gap is flagged, not filled.

Sources: end-user profiles, buying-criteria matrix and go-to-market analysis in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026); Accenture ServiceNow certification disclosure; Deloitte 2025 Professional Services Benchmark. Partner-firm retention benchmarks are not publicly disclosed with rigour; that gap is flagged, not filled.

Supplier Ecosystem

ServiceNow is the clearest case in this study of supplier power exercised directly against partners. It supplies the product, the certification, the co-sell pipeline and the tier that customers read as legitimacy — and it changed all four unilaterally in 2026. It also co-invests in the channel: ServiceNow's own Ecosystem Ventures unit has invested alongside Keensight at Plat4mation and Capital Square at InMorphis, which makes the vendor a supplier, a gatekeeper and, in some cases, a shareholder in the firms an acquirer is bidding for.

ServiceNow (tier 1)

Product, exam, curriculum, pipeline, gate — none substitutable. It retired the points system, froze status and set an 18-month threshold runway. **Program policy is the largest single variable in a partner's economics.**

The vendor as co-investor

Ecosystem Ventures co-invests alongside sponsors — Keensight at Plat4mation, Capital Square at InMorphis. An acquirer may find the vendor on the other side of the cap table.

Certified engineers

The binding constraint. Talent cannot keep pace with a platform growing above 20 percent; India's fresher intake collapsed from roughly 380,000 to roughly 120,000 while AI and ML skills drive above-inflation wage growth.

Regulators & standards

SOC 2, ISO 27001, FedRAMP, HIPAA, DORA and the EU AI Act supply the right to operate in regulated segments. DORA carries fines to 2% of worldwide turnover; the AI Act reaches full application August 2026.

Tier rationalisation, in the vendor's own words

The rationale ServiceNow's channel gave for the rebuild was that under the old points system almost every partner reached the top — and if everyone is elite, nobody is. The redesign restores the information content of the badge. For a partner firm it means the tier on its website in 2025 may not be the tier it holds in 2027, and for an acquirer it means tier status must be underwritten against the new thresholds rather than taken from the marketing page.

The internalisation play

Each supplier line converts into a moat when bought: offshore delivery insulates against wage inflation, training internalises the capacity constraint, and accelerators convert repeatable delivery labour into licensable IP carrying a software multiple.

Sources: ServiceNow program redesign (37-area points system retired, status frozen, 18-month threshold runway, five-tier ladder unified April 2026) with the channel rationale attributed to GlideFast CEO Michael Lombardo; ServiceNow Ecosystem Ventures co-investments at Plat4mation (Keensight) and InMorphis (Capital Square); NASSCOM and Indian IT-sector wage and intake data; DORA and EU AI Act application dates; all as cited in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026).

Complementary & Substitute Solutions

The complement playbook in this ecosystem is well established and well evidenced: buy project-led implementers, attach managed services and IP, sell the scaled recurring-revenue asset to a strategic. Thirdera and NewRocket were built exactly that way. The arithmetic behind it is that recurring MSP revenue prices at roughly 6 to 8x EBITDA against 3.5 to 5x for project revenue. The substitute risk runs the other way and is concentrated in the implementation stage, which is the most AI-exposed stage in the chain.

Complements, ranked by multiple effect

- **Managed-services annuity.** The proven ServiceNow play. Attach application management at go-live and the firm moves from project pricing toward the MSP median of roughly 8.9x EBITDA.
- **Proprietary IP and accelerators.** Carry a software multiple rather than a services multiple; the mechanism by which Thirdera and NewRocket became platform assets rather than consultancies.
- **ServiceNow Store products.** An app that runs only on the host platform converts delivery expertise into subscription revenue with install-base lock-in.
- **Agent governance and MCP integration.** Emerging billable categories: enterprises deploying agents need supervision, audit and integration, which recaptures hours automation removes.

Substitutes, priced honestly

- **Agentic AI in the platform itself.** ServiceNow bought Moveworks for 2.85bn dollars to put agentic AI in the product. Capability that ships natively is capability a partner no longer bills for.
- **The captive GCC.** India hosts more than 1,700 global capability centres employing 1.9 million people. Recurring run work moves in-house above a volume threshold; spiky specialist work does not.
- **Low-code and citizen development.** Substitutes for well-documented configuration; fails on complex integration, migration and regulated work requiring defensible sign-off.
- **The vendor's own services motion.** Wins the largest and most strategic accounts, as in every ecosystem where the vendor runs a professional-services P&L alongside a channel.

Sources: Aventis Advisors ServiceNow roll-up analysis (Thirdera, NewRocket, GlideFast) and subsector multiples (MSP median 8.9x; data and analytics 16.3x); Salt Creek Advisory recurring-vs-project pricing framework; ServiceNow / Moveworks USD 2.85bn (Mordor Intelligence); NASSCOM FY24 GCC data; Gartner agentic-AI projections; all as cited in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026).

Competitive Landscape

This is the most developed buy-side of any services channel in the study. Sponsor-built platforms compete directly with strategics for the same certified benches: NewRocket under Gryphon closed five ServiceNow deals in under three years, the fastest run on the list; Cognizant and DXC each hold six ServiceNow-family deals; and the newer generation — CoreX under NewSpring, Plat4mation under Keensight, InMorphis under Capital Square — is still assembling. A seller here has genuine competitive tension. A buyer has to bid for it.

Where ServiceNow sits in the lifecycle

Four-phase partner-ecosystem model

1 Open Door	2 Crowd	3 Gate	4 Maturity
Anthropic	Snowflake, Databricks	AWS, Google Cloud, NetSuite	SAP, Salesforce, Oracle



Gate · the reference case

WHAT THE PHASE IMPLIES

Certified-headcount scarcity is the moat and the first screen every buyer applies. Roughly 4% of the channel is bought, so independents remain — but with five named sponsor platforms actively buying, the window closes faster here than anywhere else.

Who is buying, and on what thesis

- → **PE-backed platforms.** NewRocket (Gryphon) five deals in under three years; CoreX (NewSpring), Plat4mation (Keensight), InMorphis (Capital Square). Sponsors drove over 27 percent of deals and pay a median 11.5x EBITDA against strategics at 9.8x.
- → **Global system integrators.** Cognizant and DXC hold six ServiceNow-family deals each; Accenture leads the sector at 201 verified acquisitions overall with an FY26 spend target near 9bn dollars.
- → **Certified capacity as the stated rationale.** CoreX closed its acquisition of InSource's ServiceNow unit in late December 2025 to more than double its US headcount and its ServiceNow certifications, folding in 1,500-plus implementations.
- → **The exit path.** Founder to sponsor to trade. Thirdera to Cognizant at roughly 430m dollars and GlideFast to ASGN at roughly 350m dollars are the two completed proofs.

Sources: Aventis Advisors ServiceNow acquirer analysis (NewRocket / Gryphon five deals; Cognizant and DXC six family deals each; CoreX / NewSpring, Plat4mation / Keensight, InMorphis / Capital Square), CoreX–InSource transaction detail (closed late December 2025), sponsor-vs-strategic multiples and the Accenture league table; all as cited in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026).

SECTION 08

Value Chain

Eight stages carry the work from ServiceNow platform to realised outcome, and this ecosystem concentrates in the middle: advisory, implementation and integration. That is its strength and its exposure. Implementation is the most AI-compressed stage, and the median private IT-services transaction fell to 8.8x EBITDA in late 2025 from 13.6x in 2023. The firms that escaped that repricing moved into run and IP.

STAGE	REVENUE MODEL	WHO CAPTURES IT	AI COMPRESSION	MULTIPLE SIGNAL
Demand generation & co-sell	Referral / co-sell	ServiceNow keeps most	Low	Neutral — but drives deal flow
Licence resale	Pass-through margin	Reseller	High	**0.5x revenue · 7.8x EBITDA** — the floor
Advisory & architecture	T&M, fixed, outcome	IT consulting firm	Rising	**9.8x EBITDA**
Implementation & configuration	T&M, fixed fee	Systems integrator	Highest	**10.7x EBITDA · 1.1x revenue**
Integration & data engineering	Project plus recurring	Data & analytics firm	Medium	**16.3x EBITDA** — the ceiling
Managed services & application run	Recurring subscription	MSP	Low	**10.7x, to 11.2x above USD 500m**
Training & enablement	Course fees	Training partner	Medium	Services band — but gates capacity

The consolidator's instruction

Own the run stage. A roll-up buying pure implementation hours buys a shrinking margin pool as AI compresses the labour content, while the same certified team attached to an application-management annuity carries recurring revenue and the lowest AI exposure in the chain.

Geography sets the base

EV/EBITDA medians run 11.2x in Asia, 10.9x in North America, 10.0x in Europe and 8.3x elsewhere, with emerging-market firms discounted for scaling and political risk. North America carries the largest median deal size at 73 to 85m dollars.

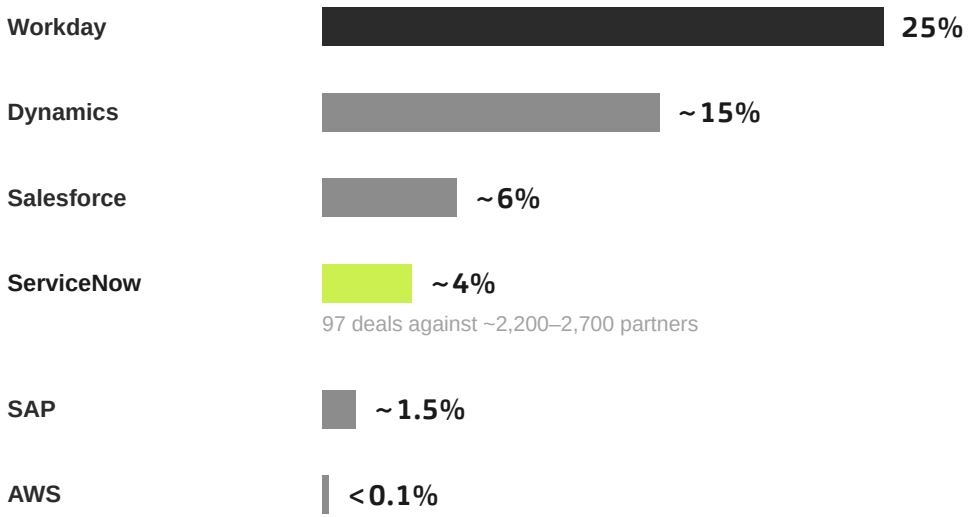
Sources: Aventis Advisors value-chain stage multiples, regional EV/EBITDA medians and the Q4 2025 median of 8.8x against a 2023 peak of 13.6x; ServiceNow roll-up analysis; all as cited in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026).

M&A Landscape

Ninety-seven verified deals against a program of roughly 2,200 to 2,700 firms puts ServiceNow at about 4 percent density — well below Workday's quarter and Dynamics' fifteen percent, and far above SAP's 1.5 percent or AWS's fraction of one percent. That is the profile of a channel where consolidation is genuinely under way but the independents have not yet run out. The report's sell-timing read is unambiguous: sell into scarcity. Certified capacity is the asset, five named platforms are buying it, and every tier rationalisation raises the price of the bench.

How much of each channel is already bought

Verified deals as a share of program population, 2015–2025



The tighter the gate, the larger the share of the channel already bought.

Five recurring deal theses

- → **Certified-capacity acquisition.** The defining thesis here. CoreX doubled its ServiceNow certifications and US headcount in a single carve-out because the bench cannot be hired at speed.
- → **Platform-pure roll-up.** ServiceNow is the one ecosystem where single-vendor purity prices highest, which is why pure-play platforms formed here and not in Adobe.
- → **Recurring-revenue conversion.** Buy project-led implementers, attach managed services and IP, sell the scaled annuity to a strategic. Thirdera and NewRocket are the proofs.
- → **Multiple arbitrage.** Sub-3m-dollar-EBITDA boutiques at 5–8x into platforms valued 10–14x; the fragmented sub-100-employee tail is the supply.
- → **Buying AI and IP to own the automation.** Agent governance and accelerators, on the same logic that took ServiceNow itself into Moveworks.

Sell-timing read

Sell into scarcity — and map the buyers first. With five named platforms and two GSIs active, this is one of the few channels where a seller can create genuine competitive tension. An owner should identify its two or three most likely acquirers by archetype before opening a process, because a single buyer with no tension anchors the price low even in a scarce market.

Sources: Aventis Advisors per-ecosystem verified deal counts, density and sell-timing reads (ServiceNow 97 deals against ~2,200–2,700 partners, ~4%; Workday 38 / ~150; Dynamics 210 / ~1,400; Salesforce 197 / ~3,400; SAP 369 / ~24,000; AWS 96 / ~140,000); deal-rationale analysis; all as cited in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026). Denominators differ in scope.

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Relevant Transactions & Takeaways

ServiceNow has the most complete disclosed transaction record of any services channel in this study, which is what makes it the reference ecosystem for pricing a certified bench. Two exits above 350 million dollars, a live sponsor-platform carve-out and a vendor that co-invests alongside the buyers. Every value below is sourced to a primary release or a named press report, and the estimates are marked as such.

TRANSACTION	ACQUIRER	YEAR	VALUE / MULTIPLE	STRATEGIC SIGNAL
Thirdera	Cognizant	2023	**~$430m**	Largest ServiceNow pure-play platform exit — the completed proof of the sponsor-build-to-strategic path.
GlideFast	ASGN	2022	**~$350m**	Roughly USD 95m of sales and about 350 consultants. A 25x EBITDA figure circulates but is a press estimate, not disclosed.
InSource (ServiceNow unit)	CoreX / NewSpring	2025	**n.d.**	Closed late December 2025; more than doubled US headcount and ServiceNow certifications, folding in 1,500-plus implementations.
Plat4mation	Keensight	—	**n.d.**	Sponsor platform with ServiceNow Ecosystem Ventures co-investing alongside — the vendor on the cap table.
Moveworks	ServiceNow	2025	**$2.85bn**	Agentic AI and 500 specialists bought by the vendor itself. Capability that ships natively is capability partners stop billing for.
Perficient	EQT / GIC	2024	**~18.5x EBITDA**	The ceiling benchmark for scaled multi-platform digital services. Estimate on disclosed reporting.

1 Underwrite the bench, not the badge

Certified headcount and specialisations are the asset. Tier status must be tested against the post-2026 thresholds.

2 Purity is a premium here

The one ecosystem where single-vendor concentration lifts rather than discounts the multiple.

3 Buy the tail, sell the platform

Half the channel is under 100 employees. Entry at 5–8x, platform value at 10–14x, exit to a strategic.

4 Move on annuity, not hours

Implementation is the most AI-compressed stage. Application-management run revenue is what survives the repricing.

5 Map your buyers first

Five sponsor platforms and two GSIs are active. Tension is available — but only if engineered.

Sources: Aventis Advisors named-deals reference table (Cognizant / Thirdera ~USD 430m 2023; ASGN / GlideFast ~USD 350m 2022, with the 25x EBITDA figure a ChannelE2E estimate rather than a disclosed number; CoreX / InSource ServiceNow unit closed late December 2025; Plat4mation / Keensight with ServiceNow Ecosystem Ventures co-investment; EQT and GIC / Perficient ~18.5x EBITDA, estimate on disclosed reporting); ServiceNow / Moveworks USD 2.85bn (Mordor Intelligence); all as cited in Baker Tilly, *The Enterprise Software Partner Ecosystem* (Sept 2026). n.d. = value not disclosed.

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