MERGERO
Hackathon challenge brief · English

Scaling M&A mandate origination

How can Mergero build innovative and scalable ways to generate more sell-side and buy-side M&A mandates in Finland and internationally?

1. About Mergero

Mergero is an institutional M&A advisory firm built for modern private markets. We advise private equity funds, corporates and business owners on buy-side and sell-side transactions, combining disciplined advisory execution with proprietary origination and matching technology. We operate from Zürich, Lugano, Frankfurt and Helsinki, serving all European markets through a single integrated team.

Where the idea came from

Our founder, Timo Tontti, started a factoring company in Finland in 2012 and built it from scratch. The company was sold in 2019, which put him on the client's side of an M&A process. The experience made one thing clear: the M&A industry is conservative, and the work could be done in a fundamentally better way.

How we work differently

We use technology and AI across the whole deal process — origination, screening, matching and execution. As a result our deal teams are smaller in headcount than in a traditional advisory firm, while carrying an equal or larger number of mandates.

What we are building

We are building the first off-market deal network. On the MGX Deal Engine platform we bring together two sides that never meet in a public process: companies whose owners are open to a transaction, and professional buyers. Buyers reach these companies through Mergero's platform — and the access comes with a buy-side advisor who facilitates the deal. Our goal is to be the first true off-market deal network in Europe.

Where we are: 18 transactions in H1 2026 and roughly 50% growth ahead · €500M+ of deals closed · 2,000+ verified buyers · €52B+ aggregate buyer appetite.

2. Background: where our mandates come from today

Everything we do depends on one thing — winning mandates. Today that still happens the traditional way, person by person. We have two sides to the business.

Sell-side mandates

The client is typically an entrepreneur or owner who is considering selling the company, or who wants more muscle behind its growth. Mandates currently come from our own network, referrals, direct inbound enquiries and active outbound sales.

The challenge: how do we identify the right companies and owners at the right moment, and contact them efficiently and personally at a far larger scale than today?

Buy-side mandates

The client is a private equity investor, family office or strategic acquirer looking for acquisition targets against defined criteria. Our job is to find companies that are not necessarily for sale and not in any public process, reach the owners, and open a credible conversation about a potential transaction.

The challenge: how do we connect the right buyers, the right companies and the right timing far better and far more scalably than today?

We already have substantial company and buyer data, our own technology and the MGX Deal Engine. Origination itself, however, is still relationship-driven — and that is precisely what limits how fast we can scale across Europe.

3. The challenge

> Design an innovative and scalable solution that helps Mergero generate significantly more sell-side and/or buy-side M&A mandates. The solution can use AI, data, automation, new sales channels, partnerships, new business models or any other approach. We are particularly interested in ideas that could work internationally and scale significantly beyond traditional relationship-driven M&A advisory.

Teams may address sell-side mandate generation, buy-side mandate generation, or both. A solution that credibly cracks one side is worth as much as one that touches everything lightly.

4. Scope: what you can build

- **No fixed technology.** You are not required to use any particular technology, and you do not have to use Mergero's existing data or the MGX platform. The best idea may be one we have never considered.
- **Any approach is in scope.** AI, automation, data, new sales channels, partnerships, new products, new business models — or something entirely different. What matters is that the end result is a new M&A mandate.
- **It need not be a finished product.** The outcome can be a working concept, a prototype, an AI agent, a workflow, or a wholly new way to build client acquisition — as long as the team can show concretely how the solution would work in practice.

5. Evaluation criteria

- **Innovation —** Does the solution bring something we do not already do, or have not thought of?
- **Scalability —** Could it realistically reach thousands or tens of thousands of potential clients and companies, and work in several countries?
- **Feasibility —** Can we genuinely pilot the solution or build on it afterwards?
- **Impact —** If it works, how significantly would it increase the number of new mandates?
- **Concreteness —** Has the team shown or described concretely enough how the solution would work in practice?

The greatest weight is on the combination of innovation, scalability and feasibility. The best solution is not necessarily the most technically advanced one; it is the one that could realistically change how we win mandates and that we can take into practice.

6. Data and confidentiality

We can share some material with participants — for example, the kinds of mandates we run and the types of buyers and companies we work with. We cannot share confidential client data. Timo Tontti will discuss real cases concretely in the opening session and will be available to answer questions during the event.

7. Mergero on site

- **Saturday —** Mergero and the challenge are presented at the 10:00 opening. We stay on site until approximately 13:00 to help teams and answer questions.
- **Sunday —** We arrive before the 15:00 deadline and take part in the judging and the closing ceremony.

Present from Mergero: Timo Tontti (Managing Partner, Head of Sell-side Advisory). Tatu Nordback (Executive Partner, Head of Buy-side Advisory) and Miiro Nygrén (Associate Director, Nordics) are expected to join — exact times to be confirmed.

Contact: Timo Tontti · timo.tontti@mergero.com · +358 400 274491