



the starr conspiracy

M&A Advisory:  
Making **Sense** of HCM  
to Make the Right  
**Acquisition** for Your  
Strategy and **Culture**

A CASE STUDY



# Navigating **Mergers** and **Acquisitions**

## The Little-Known Superpower of The Starr Conspiracy

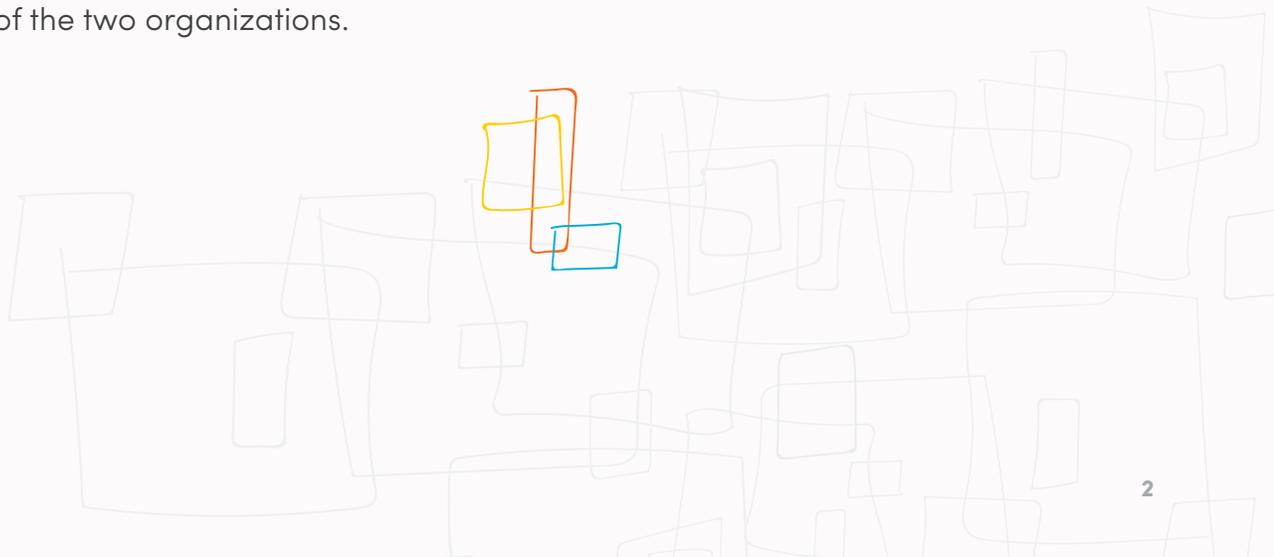
In a fast-moving industry, some companies see mergers and acquisitions as the best way to keep pace, open up new opportunities, or even leap ahead. For other companies, the opportunity to be acquired can accelerate exit time horizons and even exceed their leaders' greatest expectations.

However, mergers and acquisitions are delicate and difficult undertakings.

Many a business leader has spent sleepless nights and stressful days trying to understand the market, assess the risk and opportunity, and make the best selection for their business, employees, customers, and the future of their solution. And for good reason — bad acquisitions can cause tremendous damage to your business performance, company morale, and overall brand.

*Bad acquisitions can cause tremendous damage to your business performance and overall brand.*

To make the right choice, you need to evaluate potential solutions for what they bring to your portfolio and business strategy, but also another important aspect that's often overlooked: cultural fit. The difference between good and great acquisitions often rests on the cultural compatibility of the two organizations.





**An in-depth understanding of the market is required to find answers to these questions:**

- **What** makes certain brands special and different?
- **How** healthy is their technology and business?
- **What** are the potential returns?
- **Who** are the leaders and what are their business goals?
- **How** would this addition impact your people and culture?

One of our best-kept secrets at The Starr Conspiracy is that we provide our clients M&A advisory services. In light of our experience and insights into the leadership, technology, and cultures of so many companies in the HCM software space, providing this kind of strategic guidance just comes with the territory. We've got a unique view on the market that is both comprehensive and intimate, and as you begin to make moves for your next acquisition, you'll want us on your team.

*We advise M&A decisions for buyers and sellers, but this case study focuses on one client who wanted to make a bold acquisition that would expand their solution capabilities and align with their strategy and culture.*

**Keep reading to see what we did.**



## THE PROBLEM

### A Vast and Complicated Market

One of the industry's largest talent acquisition software providers came to The Starr Conspiracy to understand the acquisition opportunities in the HCM market. We performed a market analysis for them to provide an overview of the various types of HCM solutions and buyer expectations. This report covered market sizing, trends, the differences between enterprise and SMB solutions, and the impact of employee engagement on the market.

This research provided the company a valuable framework to determine where to focus their acquisition. Well-known for their widely used recruiting software, the company decided to expand their offerings beyond talent acquisition into post-hire solutions in the SMB space.

*This research provided the company a valuable framework to determine where to focus their acquisition.*

With three HCM solutions on their shortlist, the company commissioned another project with The Starr Conspiracy to evaluate each company and make a final recommendation based on our industry expertise. Our deep experience in the HCM space gave us not only a broad view of the market but a particularly helpful understanding of the personalities and cultures in the space. This positioned us to give strategic advice on the relevant details of each company's product, brand, leadership, and culture.





## THE SOLUTION

### A Holistic Understanding of Potential Targets

To give our client a comprehensive view of each vendor, we performed in-depth research and evaluated each company across multiple dimensions. We rated the HCM companies for factors including strength of technology, market traction, functionality, critical gaps, strengths and weaknesses, general business profile, and other attributes.

*This produced an overall score for each of the three HCM companies, which we provided along with our take on the cultural fit of each company and how each solution would align with the client's strategic goals.*

After presenting all of this research, we made a final recommendation for our client's acquisition. The HCM company we suggested offered unmatched technology to expand our client's solution and had shown impressive growth over just a few short years. Because of our knowledge of the market and our relationships with the HCM company's leaders, we knew this company was open to being acquired and shared a similar vision and culture with our client. We assessed that both companies' executives would work together well and that the acquisition would benefit both sets of strategic goals.



## THE RESULTS

### A Win-win Situation

Our client was not only impressed with the superior quality of the solution's technology and source code, but agreed that it would also be a strong cultural match. Equipped with our research and guidance, our client got the market insights they needed to feel confident in their final selection. They accepted our recommendation and chose to begin acquisition talks with the HCM company.

*Equipped with our research and guidance, our client got the market insights they needed to feel confident in their final selection.*

After we made the initial introduction between the two companies, they then entered into conversations with their M&A firms and brokers. Both parties were very happy with the outcome and final agreements, and just three months later, the acquisition was complete.





# Get M&A **Advisory** From the **Experts**

## Build Your Future on Industry Insights

As you navigate the uncertain waters of technology mergers and acquisitions, remember that you don't have to do it alone. Helping the market understand itself is our expertise. And those companies you've got your eye on? We probably know them pretty well. Heck, we've probably worked with them.

No one is better prepared to provide the industry insights you need than The Starr Conspiracy. We love advising M&A decisions because we're obsessed with bringing new technologies to the forefront of HCM and making connections between like-minded people and organizations. We believe the best HCM companies can truly improve the employee experience at work, and we want to do whatever we can to make that a reality.

In other words, we get it. Whether you're looking to buy or sell, give us a call. Let's make it happen together.

**LET'S TALK**

### About The Starr Conspiracy

The Starr Conspiracy is an integrated business-to-business marketing agency that helps HCM industry innovators propel brand awareness, drive leads, and eat market share like nobody's business. We're not your typical agency — we meld digital advertising, brand innovation, and industry insights to change categories, industries, and — yes — even the entire notion of B2B marketing as we know it. Revolutionaries hell-bent on shaking things up are welcome. Conformists, please stay home (you'll hate working with us, anyway).