

The changing face of M&A:

# The people behind the deals

Executive summary

Key findings from Datasite's 2022  
talent and diversity in M&A survey

## Foreword

# Why Datasite?

Why is Datasite, the M&A data room provider, writing a report about “The changing face of M&A”? After all, we aren’t advisors, corporates, private equity, or the financial press. What unique perspective do we bring to the table?

There’s a reason why we say ‘Datasite is where deals are made’. More than two million dealmakers in 170 countries worldwide conducted M&A on Datasite in the last four years. Some used our platform only once. Many partner with us every day.

So when something impacts the M&A community, we often hear about it first. Whether that is the search for M&A talent the community desperately needs amid the Great Resignation, the diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) initiatives many are engaging in with renewed force, or physical and mental burnout from a year of record-breaking M&A in the wake of a global pandemic. Or, as is often the case, all the above.

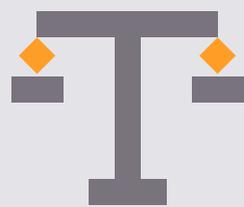
So, ultimately, the question becomes not why Datasite, but who else but Datasite? Your success is our success. Your workplace is our workplace. Without you, there is no us. You are our clients, our community, our people.

## Datasite and the M&A community

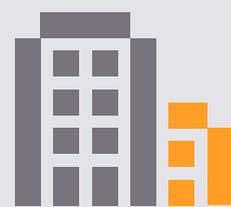
Investment  
banks



Law firms



Corporates



Private equity



Consultants



## Executive summary

# Overlapping puzzle pieces

Like life, the M&A workplace is complex, full of overlapping definitions and groupings of people. In this report, we kept our scope to only a few layers: generations, geographies, genders, race, and allyship (i.e. efforts by members of a privileged group to advance the interests of marginalized groups). In addition, we drew on comments from dealmakers in our survey to summarize some considerations going forward.

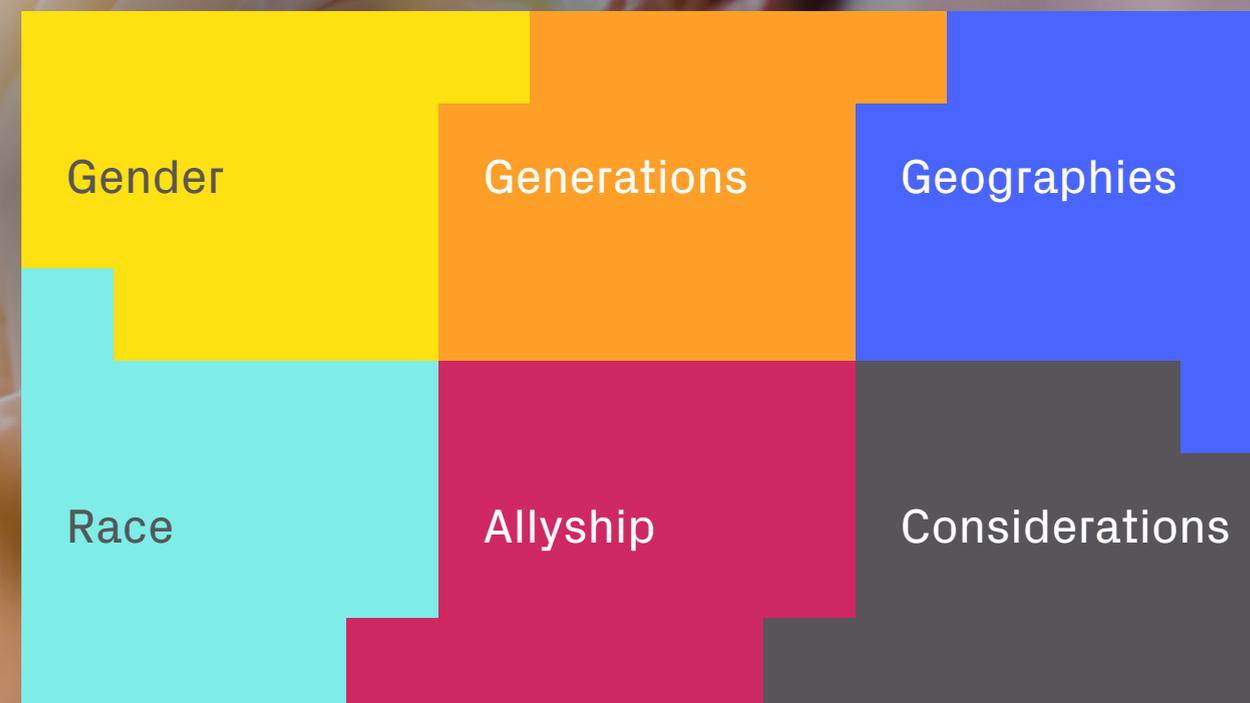
Dealmakers are inveterate puzzle solvers – after all, what is an M&A if not a giant puzzle? Rather than force a narrative from the survey results, then, we decided to present different parts of our analysis as separate pieces with multiple intersections.

Our hope is to start a dialogue by discussing what we learned and, in the words of one respondent, ‘chip away at old mindsets’.

“ ”

**Give people a chance to talk about what they think**

## M&A professionals at work



## Executive summary

# Voting with their feet

One theme above all emerges from our research: people don't stay in jobs where they feel they don't belong. M&A professionals who reported the most negative workplace sentiments were also the likeliest to actively be seeking other work.

Inclusivity is also a key front in the battle to attract and retain the best people. The Great Resignation has left employers fishing from a smaller talent pool, meaning workplace culture is now a valuable lure.

Hiring and retention depends more than ever on building a diverse and inclusive work environment. We hope that our findings will offer many insights into how to approach this challenge.

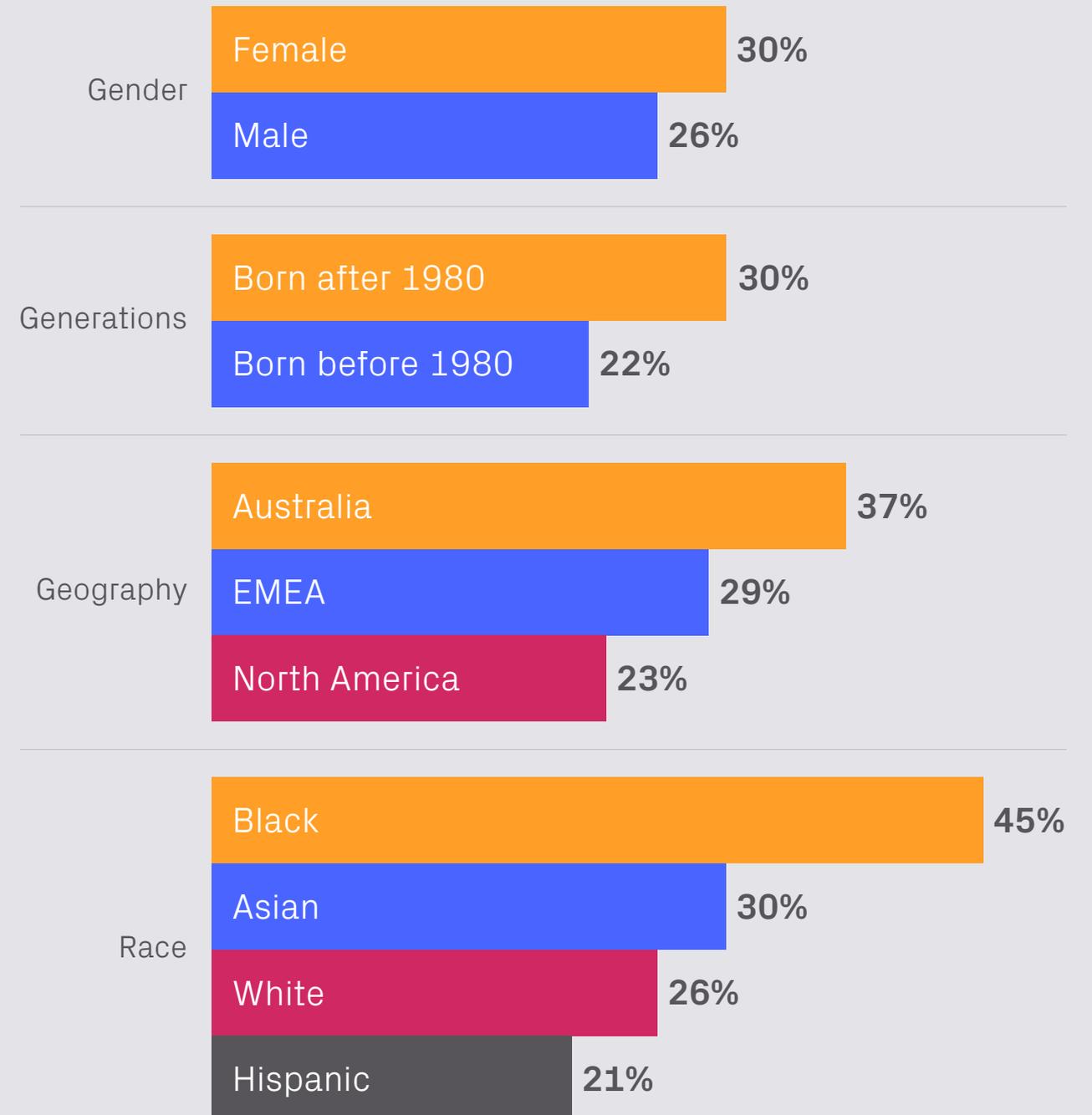
“ ”

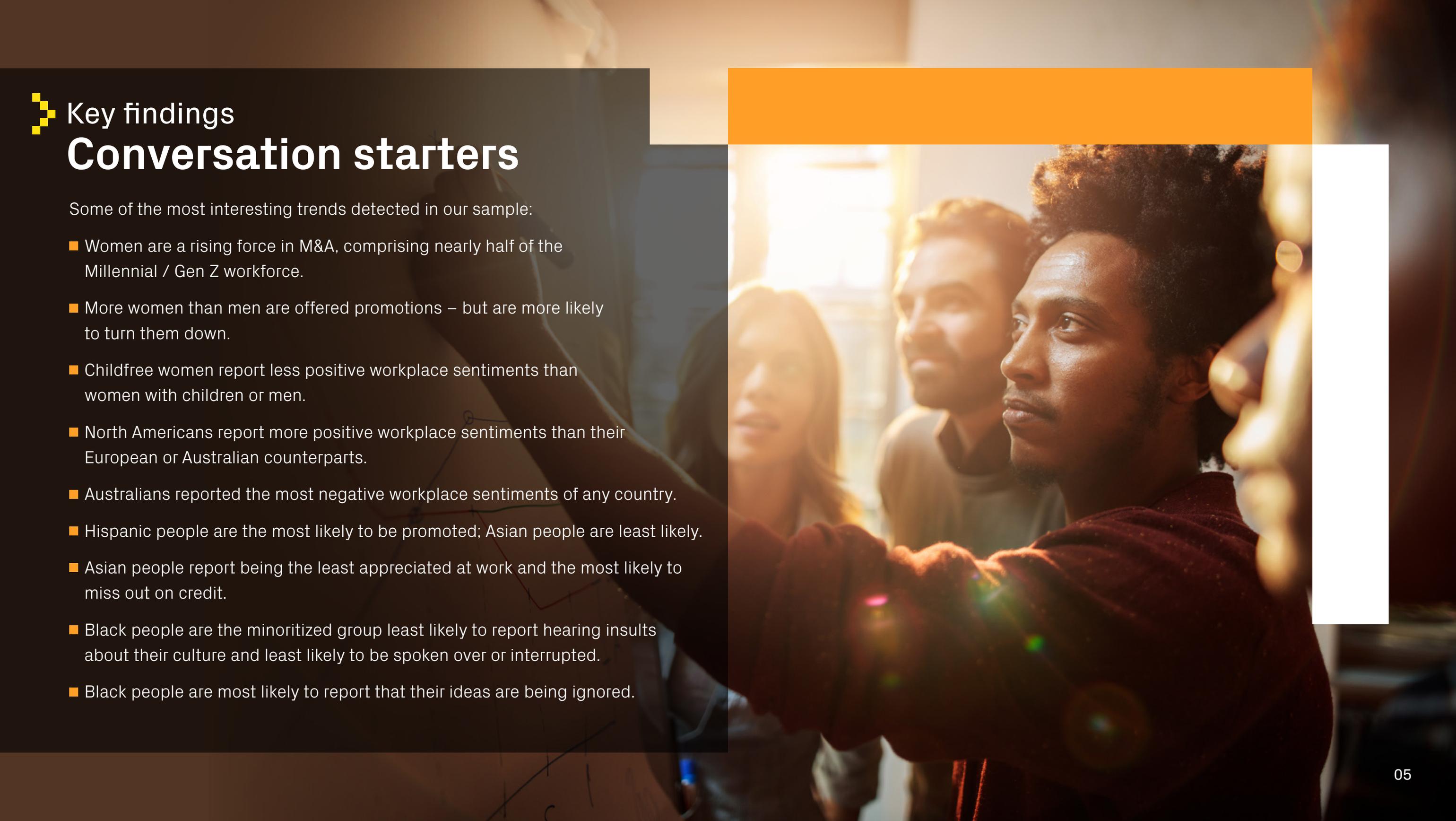
I am thinking of quitting this company

“ ”

We just need more people interested in working for us

## M&A professionals actively seeking another job



A group of diverse people in a meeting, with a man in the foreground pointing at a whiteboard. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting an indoor setting with large windows or a bright light source. The man in the foreground is wearing a dark red hoodie and is looking towards the right. Other people are visible in the background, some looking towards the same direction. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

## Key findings

# Conversation starters

Some of the most interesting trends detected in our sample:

- Women are a rising force in M&A, comprising nearly half of the Millennial / Gen Z workforce.
- More women than men are offered promotions – but are more likely to turn them down.
- Childfree women report less positive workplace sentiments than women with children or men.
- North Americans report more positive workplace sentiments than their European or Australian counterparts.
- Australians reported the most negative workplace sentiments of any country.
- Hispanic people are the most likely to be promoted; Asian people are least likely.
- Asian people report being the least appreciated at work and the most likely to miss out on credit.
- Black people are the minoritized group least likely to report hearing insults about their culture and least likely to be spoken over or interrupted.
- Black people are most likely to report that their ideas are being ignored.



# Conversation starters

Broader trends we have observed in our sample:

- Millennials and Gen Z appear less satisfied at work than Gen Xers and Boomers, and are more likely to be seeking another job.
- Active jobseeking is also higher among women, Australians, and Black and Asian people.
- Female career progression is faster than male's up to manager level. But then more men attain senior manager and above.
- Two-thirds or more have children under 18 (except in Australia) and 10% more men than women have children.
- Men report more positive sentiments and interactions at work.
- Women are 13% more likely than men to report consistent interruptions.
- Slightly more people identify as LGBTQIA among Millennials and Gen Z.
- Investment banks and law firms have 8% more minoritized groups than corporates and private equity firms.
- Career advancement stalls at the group head / executive level for Black and Asian people.

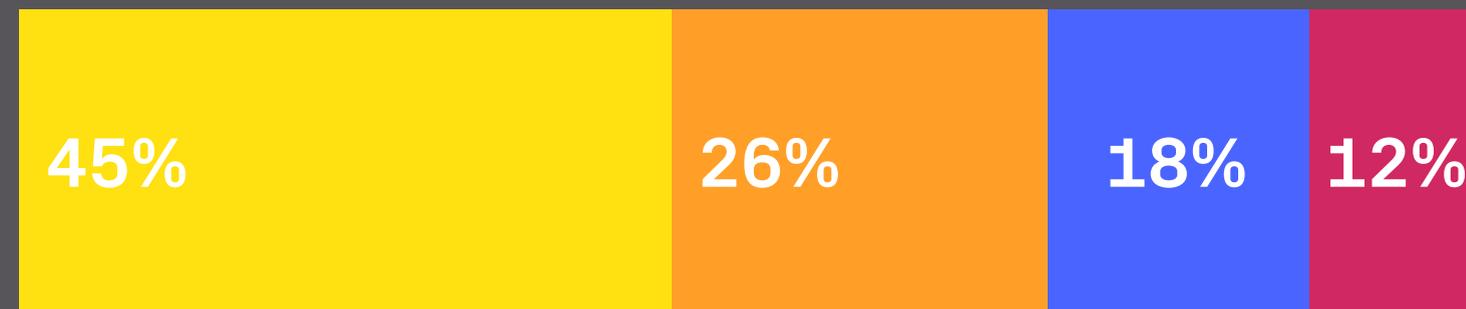
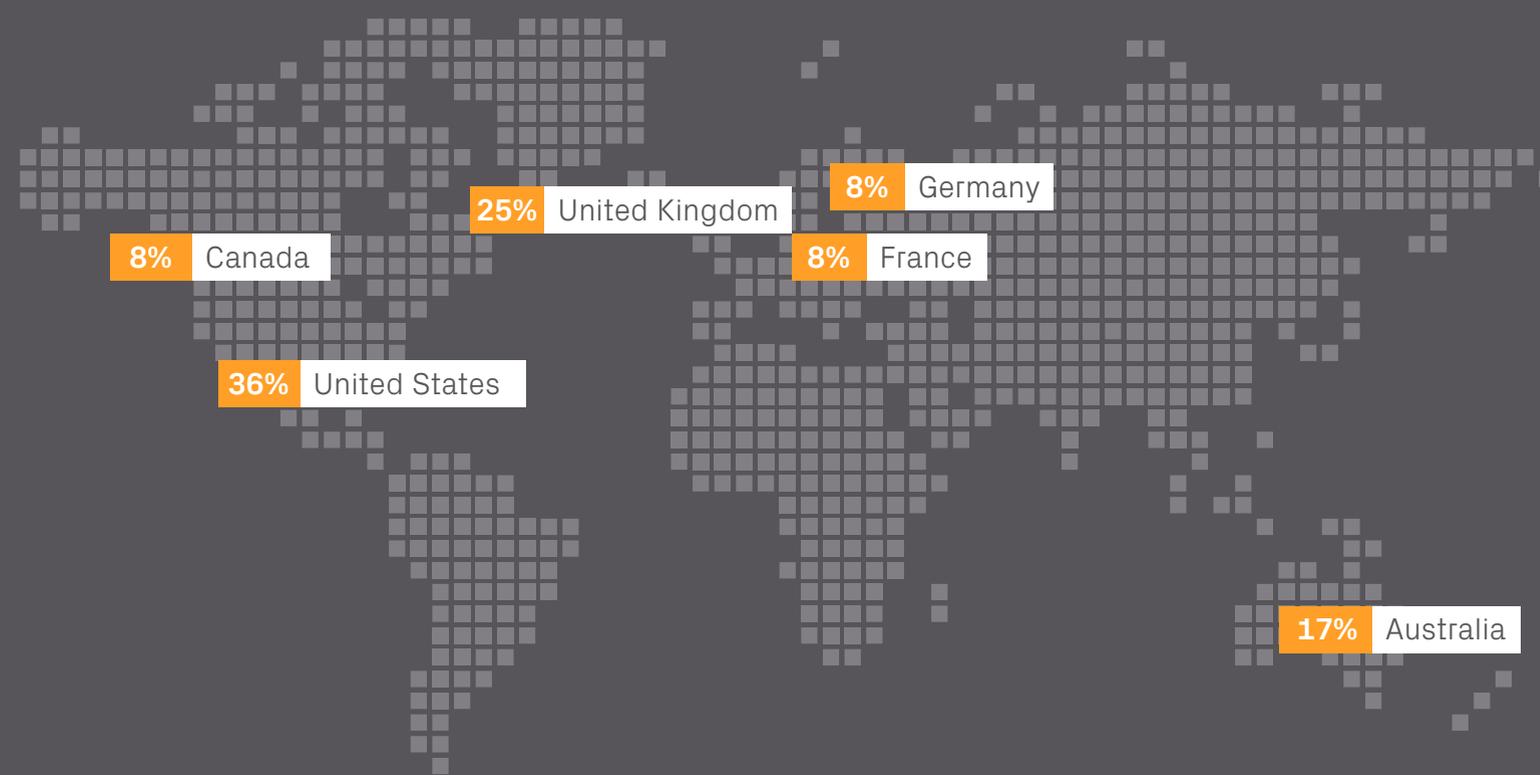
## Our research Process

We surveyed 600+ global M&A professionals from six different countries to explore their thinking about their workplaces. In addition to geographical regions, we focused also on companies, private equity firms, investment banks, and law firms.

Respondents shared their own demographics, promotion and raise history, work concerns, personal interactions, and action points. We also sought their perspective on DE&I issues, and how these buzzwords translate into practical workplace experience.

Naturally our work owes a great debt to previous studies. We have included a list of publications we referenced in the creation of this report. With the largest pool of respondents being in the United States, we also used the US Census as our guide on demographic questions about gender, sexual, and racial identity.

Making this report was a collaborative, iterative process. The intentionally high number of contributors aims to reflect as many perspectives on the research as possible. Some wished to remain anonymous, while others can be found in the acknowledgements.



■ Corporate ■ Private equity ■ Investment banking ■ Law firms



# Our research Limitations

Although 600 M&A professionals sounds like a lot, on a global scale it cannot represent everyone. Some of the constraints we faced include:

**US demographic bias.** Because the largest pool of respondents are in the United States, we used the US Census as our guide for collecting demographic data.

**Generations.** All working generations participate in M&A. However, the bulk are Millennial and Gen X, who are ages 26-57 in 2022. As a result, our samples of Gen Z and Boomers are small.

**Geographic.** M&A occurs in every location around the world – each with a unique identity. However, we were only able to survey M&A professionals from six countries. Of those, only the US, UK, and Australia offered sample sizes of 100 individuals or more.

**Gender and sexual orientation.** Despite our robust sample of women and men, none of the 600 M&A professionals identify as non-binary. Around 10% (59 individuals) identify as LGBTQIA.

**Race.** Our aim was to treat minoritized ethnic groups as distinct from one another. Consequently, sample sizes per group are small. This data should therefore be considered in light of the interesting questions it raises, rather than for any answers it may suggest.

**Organizational types.** We tried to draw professionals from across the M&A ecosystem, including corporates (268), private equity (153), investment banks (107), and law firms (72). But this isn't everyone; notably, consultants and accountants are missing.



# Our research Terminology

We've tried to avoid prescriptive or restrictive definitions, keeping in mind the many regional variances and perspectives. However, several oft-used terms are worth highlighting:

**Allyship.** The status or role of a person who advocates and actively works for the inclusion of a marginalized or politicized group in all areas of society, not as a member of that group but under its leadership, in solidarity with its struggle and point of view.

**Diversity.** The inclusion of individuals representing more than one national origin, color, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation, etc.\*

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I).** A conceptual framework that promotes the fair treatment and full participation of all people, especially in the workplace, including populations who have historically been underrepresented or subject to discrimination because of their background, identity, disability, etc.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dictionary.com

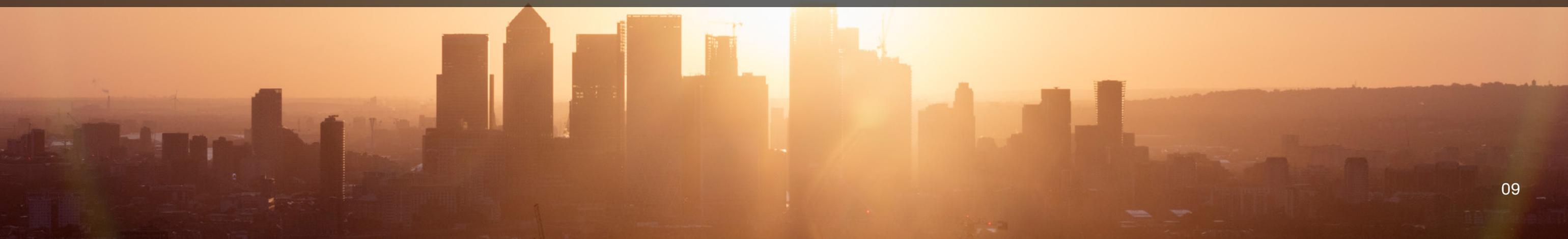
<sup>2</sup>"From Race and ethnicity: How are they different?", National Geographic.

**Equity.** The policy or practice of accounting for the differences in each individual's starting point when pursuing a goal or achievement, and working to remove barriers to equal opportunity, as by providing support based on the unique needs of individual students or employees.\*

**Inclusion.** The practice or policy of including and integrating all people and groups in activities, organizations, political processes, etc., especially those who are disadvantaged, have suffered discrimination, or are living with disabilities.\*

**Minoritized.** Who is part of a minority group fundamentally hinges on the where, particularly in a multi-country survey like this one. For that reason, we've chosen to use the term minoritized, which is more context-dependent. Minoritized describes a group of people based on their relationship to the dominant group at a certain time and place.

**Race.** A social construct used to categorize and characterize seemingly distinct populations. It is usually linked to physical characteristics such as skin color or hair texture.<sup>2</sup>



# Our research Resources

Publications that proved most valuable to us in our research included:

Women in the Workplace, LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company

The Parental Earnings Gap in the United States, Center for Economic Studies, US Census Bureau

Women of Color Get Less Support at Work. Here's How Managers Can Change That, Harvard Business Review

Day-to-Day Experiences of Emotional Tax Among Women and Men of Color in the Workplace (Report), Catalyst

Travis, D. J., Shaffer, E., & Ohm, J. (2022). How to hold your organization accountable to DEI goals. Catalyst.

Brassel, S., Ohm, J., & Travis, D. J. (2021). Allyship and curiosity drive inclusion for people of color at work. Catalyst

Deloitte's a new mandate for M&A: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Why Diversity Audits are Essential in Mergers & Acquisitions, Bloomberg Law

STAATUS Index: Social Tracking of Asian Americans in the U.S., by LAAUNCH

Bain & Company "The Fabric of Belonging: How to Weave an Inclusive Culture"

Harvard Business Review "Toward a Racially Just Workplace"

AAUW news and reports

The Conference Board, Making the Most of Diversity and Inclusion in M&A Integrations

Breadwinning Mothers continue to be the U.S. norm, Center for American Progress

Q1 Corporate Update: Finding and Fostering M&A Talent, February 17, 2022

2022 Employee Experience Trends – Qualtrics XM – accessed June 2022

Diversity in Germany – Studying marking ten years of the Diversity Charter" – Charta der Vielfalt + Ernst & Young GmbH – updated 2016

Nicole Dunn - "Workplace Well- Being 2022" – Forbes – updated Mar 2022

Why do so many working-class people feel alienated at work?– Financial Times – updated May 31, 2022

I.E. Smith – "Minority vs. Minoritized: Why the Noun just doesn't cut it" Odyssey

Erin Blakemore – Race and ethnicity: How are they different?, February 22, 2019, the National Geographic

## ➤ Acknowledgments

# Giving public thanks

It's impossible to spend months of reviewing data on DE&I in M&A and not do some self-reflecting. One of those reflections is just how many people worked to bring this research to life. The other is that when working on these bodies of research, we typically don't give public thanks or acknowledgment at all. So, this note is a first step to taking some of the learnings from this report and putting them into practice.

First and foremost, thank you to the 600 survey participants for being so generous with their time, perspectives, and comments. Without their willingness to share their experiences, this report would never have happened.

Next, thank you to all my colleagues at Datasite whose passion for our clients and industry fed into this report. Some 45 of my colleagues have helped to bring this report into being, many providing feedback in their spare time. It was new territory for us all, and we stumbled often. On the way, we lived one of the research's key findings: the biggest blocker to discussing diversity is not lack of interest, but fears about how to engage. But engage we did. And every discussion and data point brought fresh insights and deeper dialogues. For this alone, it's been worth it.





To thank everyone who helped with this survey would be impossible. However, the following deserve special mentions: None of this could have happened without support at the highest levels. Huge thanks go to Deb LaMere, Chief Human Resources Officer, and Doug Cullen, Chief Marketing Officer, for their sponsorship and thoughtful engagement.

Thank you, Omar Janabi, for commissioning a survey on M&A people that went beyond the usual questions. Thanks also to my boss, Nicholas Renter, for his fine eye for detail and unending support. And to Marta Carraro, for always pushing us onwards.

For conducting the research and all that it involved, thanks to our indispensable core team: Laura Powers, Anthony Scudieri, Kathy Zhao, Hamza Rizvancevic, Tara Wambach, Deirdre Murdy, Emily Ehlers, Hana Askren, and Will Glusman. To Elle Cathey for being my sounding board. To Amanda Brunberg for her great visuals, and Suzy Bibko and Nick Green for their edits. Also to the many others who lent their time and effort: Marcio Moerbeck, Kelsey Scheel, Naeem Badiuzzaman, Chris Tack, Lydia Scharf, Grace Kuan, Julija Sungailaite, and Diana Chang.

Beyond marketing, I thank Datasite's own DE&I committee: Eric Ruppert, Hanan Isaaq, Jennifer Skluth, Hillary Pryor, Reshma Shekar, and Tiffany Picciano, who were extremely generous with their time. Thanks also to Taylor Dixon, Shelby Allen, Bryan Keller, Alisha Pierson, Nicola Wigdahl, Bri Lopez, Aaron Schoon, Dumenicah Karanja, Annie Smith, Dayo Famakinwa, and Nigel Lovell, for multiple reviews and fresh insights. Last but not least, JR Harrell for guiding me through some thorny data points. Apologies if I have forgotten anyone – you know who you are. Thank you.

**Abby Roberts**

Sr. Director, Datasite Insights

# Get in touch

We took a deep dive into the changing face of M&A. This chapter is one of a series examining the different experiences of the people behind the deals.

**Learn more** ➔

## Discover the Datasite difference

If your organization is contemplating an M&A, financing, tax clawback, or other transaction, talk to Datasite. You don't have to be an M&A expert – you don't even have to have undertaken a major transaction before.

By taking advantage of our best-in-class project management support and technology, you can greatly reduce the transaction management challenges ahead.



    #wheredealsaremade

**Get in touch, visit** [www.datasite.com](http://www.datasite.com) **or contact:** [info@datasite.com](mailto:info@datasite.com) | **AMERS** +1 888 311 4100 | **EMEA** +44 20 3031 6300 | **APAC** +852 3905 4800

©Datasite. All rights reserved. All trademarks are property of their respective owners. DS-1.345-01

 **Datasite**®