GERALD EDELMAN

WINNERS EDITION

ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH ACQUISITION AWARDS 2026

RECOGNISING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SEARCHERS AND ACQUISITION ENTREPRENEURS


ENTREPRENEURSHIP
THROUGH
ACQUISITION
AWARDS
2026










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DEAL OF THE YEAR (TRADITIONAL)
AND THE
WINNER IS.






ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH ACQUISITION AWARDS
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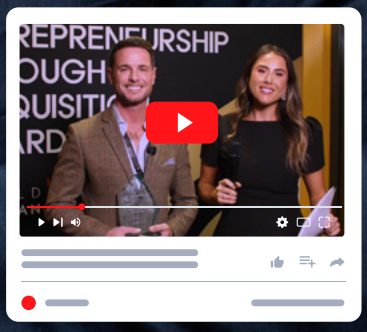
2026 ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH ACQUISITION AWARDS

The inception of the ETA Awards stems from a profound belief in and passion for the transformative power of entrepreneurship through acquisition and the value it adds to the SME sector. My experience in this field has shown me the immense potential that lies in identifying, acquiring, and scaling businesses, and I am excited that I not only get to advise searchers on their journey, but also get to celebrate with them. The ETA Awards are more than just accolades; by highlighting the successes and innovations within our community, the ETA Awards aim to inspire the next generation of acquisition entrepreneurs, spread the word and help to cement a legacy for the sector.

Carl Lundberg

Carl Lundberg

CEO Gerald Edelman | Founder of ETA Awards



Watch last year's highlights

Read my article "Your Complete Guide to Search Funds"

AWARD WINNERS

LENDER OF THE YEAR

Metro Bank

WINNER



QUASTELS
LEGAL ADVISERS

DEAL OF THE YEAR (SELF-FUNDED)

Maple House Capital

WINNER



MARRIOTT HARRISON

DEAL OF THE YEAR (TRADITIONAL)

Touchstone Point

WINNER



jmw

INTERN OF THE YEAR

Theo Buffini

WINNER



London Business School — Institute of Entrepreneurship and Private Capital

SERIAL ACQUIRER OF THE YEAR

Numeris Groupe

WINNER



strada

ESG EXCELLENCE

Newton Equity Partners

WINNER



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COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Simon Webster raised the first search fund outside North America in 1992 and in 1995 acquired Rehabilitation Services, a prosthetics and orthotics business. Over ten years as CEO he grew it from £3.5 million to £30 million in revenue, delivering top-quartile returns for his investors. Since then he has backed near to 100 search funds, chaired the European Search Fund Association, helped found the International Search Fund Centre at IESE, and taught ETA at London Business School, Cambridge Judge and INSEAD.

WINNER

Simon Webster

Investor, Educator and Mentor



LENDER OF THE YEAR

WINNER

METRO BANK

CATEGORY SPONSOR

QUASTELS
LEGAL ADVISERS

The Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition market depends on lenders willing to back ambitious entrepreneurs, and this year's winner demonstrated exactly that.

Metro Bank distinguished itself through its deep understanding of ETA, its willingness to take a flexible approach to transactions and its commitment to supporting entrepreneurs throughout the ownership journey.

The judges were particularly impressed by the bank's ability to structure solutions around the unique needs of acquisition entrepreneurs, rather than trying to fit those businesses into traditional lending frameworks. Its combination of risk appetite, responsiveness and sector expertise has helped unlock opportunities that may otherwise never have happened.

Beyond providing capital, Metro Bank has become a genuine partner to many acquisition entrepreneurs and continues to play an important role in the development of the ETA ecosystem.







DEAL OF THE YEAR (SELF-FUNDED)

WINNER

MAPLE HOUSE CAPITAL

CATEGORY SPONSOR

MARRIOTT HARRISON

The acquisition of Millenium Site Services and Millenium Properties demonstrated what can be achieved through the self-funded ETA model when entrepreneurial determination is combined with exceptional deal execution.

Faced with a highly complex transaction, the team assembled a creative funding structure, overcame significant financing and diligence challenges, and completed a deal that many would have considered beyond the reach of a self-funded searcher.

What particularly impressed the judges was not only the completion of the acquisition itself, but the tangible value creation that followed. Early operational improvements, margin enhancement, debt reduction and growth initiatives demonstrated a clear ability to execute after the deal had closed.

This was a transaction that pushed the boundaries of self-funded ETA and set a new benchmark for what is possible within the community.







DEAL OF THE YEAR (TRADITIONAL)

WINNER

PASSMARK SOFTWARE

CATEGORY SPONSOR

jmw

In a highly competitive category, this entry stood out for its combination of innovation, execution and entrepreneurial achievement.

The acquisition of PassMark Software was a complex, cross-border transaction completed against a challenging fundraising backdrop and within a highly competitive market.

The judges were impressed by the creativity, resilience and determination shown throughout the process, as well as the strength of the traditional search model that underpinned the acquisition.

Beyond the transaction itself, the business demonstrated strong early performance, clear operational improvements and a compelling vision for future growth. Most importantly, this deal embodied the essence of Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition: identifying an exceptional business, earning the trust of vendors and investors, and creating long-term value through active ownership. For the quality of the transaction, the challenges overcome and the results achieved, the judges were unanimous in selecting this year's winner.







INTERN OF THE YEAR

WINNER

Theo Buffini

CATEGORY SPONSOR

London Business School — Institute of Entrepreneurship and Private Capital

The Intern of the Year Award goes to someone who did not just wait to be taught.

Our winner demonstrated an exceptional breadth of contribution throughout their internship, going far beyond what would normally be expected of an intern.

Working across sourcing, due diligence and post-acquisition operations, Theo consistently showed initiative, maturity and a willingness to take ownership. From helping develop sourcing infrastructure to supporting operational projects within portfolio businesses, his contribution extended across the full ETA lifecycle.

The judges were particularly impressed by his ability to move seamlessly between analytical work and practical execution, delivering meaningful value to the platform while gaining a deep understanding of business ownership through acquisition.

Above all, Theo embodied the qualities this award seeks to recognise: curiosity, reliability, initiative and impact.





SERIAL ACQUIRER OF THE YEAR

WINNER

NUMERIS

CATEGORY SPONSOR

strada

Numeris demonstrated the power of disciplined acquisition strategy, repeatable execution and outstanding integration capability.

Over the qualifying period, Numeris completed six acquisitions, adding significant revenue and EBITDA while building a market-leading position within a highly fragmented sector.

What impressed the judges most was the consistency of execution across multiple transactions and the clear strategic rationale underpinning every acquisition. The business showed that successful serial acquisition is about more than simply completing deals. It requires integration, cultural alignment, operational improvement and long-term value creation.

Numeris demonstrated excellence in all of these areas. In a category filled with impressive buy-and-build stories, Numeris distinguished itself through scale, consistency and measurable results.







ESG EXCELLENCE

WINNER

CATEGORY SPONSOR

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They have demonstrated that strong ESG principles and strong commercial performance are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they can reinforce one another.

Newton Equity Partners impressed the judges with a comprehensive and measurable approach to ESG that extends across the entire investment lifecycle.

From investment selection and due diligence through to portfolio company support and governance, ESG considerations are embedded into decision-making rather than treated as a standalone initiative.

What set this entry apart was the quality of evidence provided. The judges saw clear examples of measurable environmental improvements, robust governance frameworks and meaningful stakeholder outcomes, all supported by recognised standards and transparent reporting.

This is an organisation that has shown genuine leadership in responsible investment and set a high standard for the wider ETA community.



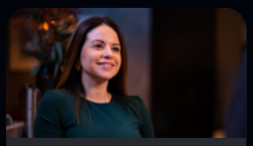


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SPECIALIST SEARCH FUND ADVISERS

Our team have developed a leading reputation in the Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition community, having supported many searchers with transactions and structuring matters over the past few years.

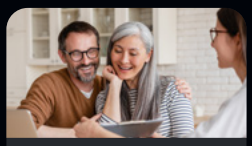
We offer a comprehensive range of services, including:



Completion accounts support



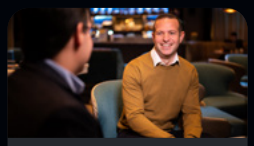
Market mapping and target identification



Structuring of acquisition vehicle and tax optimisation



Project management and buy-side advisory



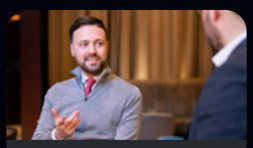
Pre-sale planning



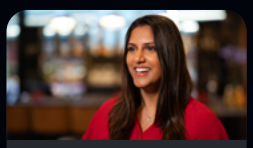
Financial and tax due diligence



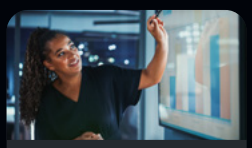
Outreach and information sharing



Debt support and advisory



Sell-side advisory



Deal/offer structuring

Our Corporate Finance team has the expertise and experience to support you through the entire transaction process to ensure you come away with the best possible outcome.

CONTACT OUR TEAM AND SEE HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

hello@geraldedelman.com

+44 (0)20 7299 1400

Read the article "What are the characteristics of a good search fund target?"

MARRIOTT HARRISON

SPECIALIST SUPPORT FOR AMBITIOUS ACQUISITIONS

From searchers finding their first target to serial acquirers strengthening their portfolios, we help our clients turn acquisition ambitions into lasting growth.

We provide pragmatic M&A and finance advice to ambitious entrepreneurs, dealmakers, and lenders focused on entrepreneurship through acquisition (ETA), combining sharp legal judgement with a deep understanding of commercial priorities.

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Deal of the Year (Traditional)

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T: 0203 675 7600 **jmw.co.uk**

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LV8

LV8 is Strada Partners' program designed to identify, back and elevate top-tier operators to acquire and scale high-quality businesses across Europe.

Already proven across the Strada portfolio, the LV8 concept has produced founder-led platforms in technology, business services, and healthcare.

€593M	15	2	17
CAPITAL COMMITTED TO GROWTH	PORTFOLIO COMPANIES	EXITS	TEAM MEMBERS

ABOUT STRADA

Strada Partners is a European investment firm focused on growth companies in the services, software, and healthcare sectors, where the team combines deep operational and investment experience. Strada builds a concentrated portfolio of companies it can support over the long term to grow at a pan-European level.

Find. Buy. Elevate.

If you are an operator ready to acquire and scale, we would like to meet you. **Find us at the ETA Awards for a chat!**



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The Found & Funded Podcast

The podcast for searchers by search experts.

Learn from those who have done it. How ambitious leaders acquire, grow and transform companies.

Hosted by Carl Lundberg, CEO of Gerald Edelman and Founder of The ETA Awards.

Stream seasons 1–4 now









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