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August 2, 2019

<https://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/338910/pace-of-ma-deals-slows-to-a-crawl.html>

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## Pace Of M&A Deals Slows To A Crawl

The pace of M&A deals by holding companies and consultancies for the first half of the year slowed considerably, compared to the last couple of years, **according to a new analysis by COMvergence.**

The agency tracker found just 24 deals had been agreed during the period versus 30 in the prior year, 42 in the first half of 2017 and 75 during H1 2016.

That's a 69% drop between this year and three years ago.

Dentsu leads the pack this year through the first six months with six deals, albeit relatively small ones. Combined, the acquired firms have estimated annual revenues of \$85 million.

The mega-deal of the half of course was Publicis Groupe's \$4-plus billion acquisition of data and marketing giant Epsilon.

Accenture Interactive made headlines with its estimated \$475 million deal for Droga5. Stagwell's \$100 million investment in MDC was also a headline grabber; it put Stagwell founder Mark Penn in the pilot's seat at MDC as Chairman-CEO.

WPP made more news for what it sold during the first half, which included stakes in RAA, Chime and The Farm Group as it continues to shed non-core assets. In July, it struck a deal to sell Bain 60% of Kantar.

COMvergence notes it's the first time in at least four years that WPP didn't do an M&A deal during H1.