— FOUNDER-OWNED

Founder-Owned, Not PE-Owned

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Across professional services, private equity is buying up the firms people work for. Consultancies, law firms, accountancy practices: the ownership is quietly changing hands. Systech MDP is going the other way, and it changes what it feels like to work here.

Most people never ask who owns the company they work for. Then a fund buys it, and suddenly they find out exactly what that means.

What changes when a fund takes over

The pattern is well worn by now. A private equity house acquires a professional services firm, and the clock starts. The model runs on a three-to-seven-year hold, then an exit at a higher multiple, and everything in between is bent toward that outcome.

- **Costs get cut** to lift the margin the fund will sell on, and the costs are usually people.
- **Utilisation goes up.** The pressure to bill flows straight down to the individual, and the space to do careful, considered work quietly disappears.
- **The horizon shortens.** Decisions get made for the next valuation event, not the next decade, so investment in training, tools and the long game becomes hard to justify.
- **The culture depersonalises.** Once you are an asset on a balance sheet being prepared for sale, that is, in the end, how you get treated.

None of this is a moral failing on anyone's part. It is simply what the ownership model is built to do. The incentives were set the day the fund signed.

THE CLOCK

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Why founder-owned is different

Systech MDP is **founder-owned and privately financed**. There is no external fund, no hold period, and no exit clock counting down in the background. That single fact changes the incentives all the way down.

- **We can think in decades, not quarters.** Decisions are made for where the business should be in ten years, not for a valuation event in three.
- **We invest in people because people are the business,** not a cost line to be trimmed ahead of a sale.
- **We can do the work properly.** Without a margin target set by someone preparing to sell, there is room to be thorough, which is the whole point of expert work.
- **The people you join are the people who own it.** Accountability sits with the founder, not an investment committee you will never meet.

What that means if you work here

It means stability that is structural, not promised. It means your development is an investment the owner actually benefits from, rather than a cost the next buyer will question. It means the person ultimately responsible for the firm has their name on it and intends to be here for the long term. And it means the work you do is measured by whether it is **right**, not by whether it hits a number set to flatter a sale.

That is a rarer thing in professional services than it used to be, and it is worth being deliberate about.

The bottom line

If you are weighing up where to build a career in construction disputes, project services or the wider consultancy world, the ownership of the firm is not a detail. It quietly shapes everything: how you are managed, how you are developed, and whether the work is allowed to be good. **Founder-owned, not PE-owned, is not a slogan. It is the reason this place can be what it is.**

If you are thinking about your next move in this sector, it is worth asking who owns the firm, and what that means for the people inside it.

Systech MDP is founder-owned and privately financed. This article reflects a perspective on ownership models in professional services and is general commentary, not a statement about any specific firm or transaction.