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**Let's Make a Deal! M&A Involving RIAs in 2019 Surged 60% – and Doubled From 2017 – to Reach a New Record High, says FA Insight Report**

*Acquirers from across the industry fueled the surge, including an increase in first-time buyers*

**JERSEY CITY, N.J., Jan. 15, 2020** – Obliterating previous records, mergers and acquisition activity among registered investment advisors (RIAs) surged to new highs in 2019, according to the [FA Insight Mergers & Acquisitions Activity: 2019 Year-End Update](#) from TD Ameritrade Institutional.<sup>1</sup>

After an extremely active first half of the year, M&A activity continued its record-setting pace, according to FA Insight.<sup>2</sup> In total, advisory firms in 2019 announced 144 transactions. That figure is *double* the 72 deals announced in 2017 and a 60 percent increase over 2018, the previous record year. In all, the advisory firms that were merged or acquired managed a total of \$156 billion in assets, up 66 percent over 2018 and 23 percent higher than the previous record of \$127 billion set in 2015.

Repeat buyers led the charge in acquisitions in 2019, accounting for 59 percent of the deal announcements. Among those completing multiple transactions, seven firms entered four or more deals, accounting for a quarter (26 percent) of the total transactions. Mercer Advisors was the most active, announcing 11 deals last year.

“All the stars were aligned for driving robust levels of M&A among advisory firms: historically low interest rates, an influx of private equity, healthy RIA profits and valuations, and aging leadership searching for an exit or succession strategy,” said Pete Dorsey, Managing Director of Sales and Client Management at TD Ameritrade Institutional. “Mix all these ingredients together and you may have an ideal environment for more M&A activity. We could see another strong year for M&A again in 2020 and perhaps beyond.”

Among the largest deals by assets under management (AUM), TA Associates acquired a major equity stake in the \$11.8 billion AUM Wealth Enhancement Group from Lightyear Capital, while 1251 Capital Group and Management, announced intentions to acquire a majority stake in \$10.5 billion AUM Ziegler Capital Management.

For a copy of the FA Insight 2019 M&A report, please visit [www.fainsight.com](http://www.fainsight.com).

**Methodology**

The FA Insight M&A Database tracks U.S.-based RIAs or independent trust companies that have been acquired or merged into another firm. The “target” firms sold or merged into another must directly serve households or individual clients and they must manage at least \$50 million in AUM or generate at least \$500,000 in annual revenue. Transactions also must involve an exchange of equity with an outside party representing 10 percent or more of the target firm’s value.

The database excludes firms with more than \$20 billion in AUM, transactions targeting independent broker-dealers, internal transitions of ownership, as well as individuals or teams joining a firm.

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<sup>2</sup> FA Insight is a product of TD Ameritrade Institutional and a trademark owned by TD Ameritrade IP Company, Inc.

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TD Ameritrade Institutional empowers more than 7,000 independent registered investment advisors to transform the lives of their clients. It provides powerful technology and resources that help simplify running a business and let advisors spend more time doing what matters most — serving their clients. Through meaningful innovation, steadfast advocacy and unwavering service, TD Ameritrade Institutional supports RIAs as they build businesses that positively impact their clients and communities.

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