



# 3Q 2024 in Review

Future of Work M&A and Investment Activity

# About Venero Capital Advisors

# #1 Work Tech corporate finance and M&A advisor globally



100% focused on the  
Future of Work sector

Deep market insights  
and participation

Unrivalled access to  
decision makers

Highly experienced  
senior advisors

“ Our Sector Expertise Becomes Your Competitive Advantage ”

## Sell-Side M&A

Most Work Tech acquisitions involve strategic buyers with limited track record of HCM sector M&A. Without a broad understanding of sector dynamics, it can be very hard to create a long list of suitable potential acquirers.

We have been covering Work Tech for years and have developed senior-level access to a long list of suitable strategic and financial acquirers, including potentially non-obvious ones.

## Buy-Side M&A

Our deep sector expertise and knowledge of the Work Tech landscape provides buyers with a competitive advantage when bidding for assets.

As part of a buy-side mandate, we can help you select the preferred target segments, produce a shortlist of suitable acquisition prospects, approach them confidentially and execute the transaction based on well-defined criteria.

## Debt Financing & Equity Capital Raising

Leveraging our understanding of the proof points sought by investors and lenders, we can help you develop a funding thesis that is sufficiently differentiated, defensible, well structured and appealing.

A well-executed financing round will also benefit from our insights into valuation benchmarking, investor and lender access, potential concerns, process structuring and term negotiations, through to closing.

# Our coverage of the WorkTech ecosystem

Venero offers unparalleled coverage of the WorkTech ecosystem, maintaining deep and long-standing relationships with corporates and investors globally

An industry driven by constant innovation and change requires the sophistication of an advisor who can think ahead of the market and utilize solid industry relationships and insights to help advance your vision

Our team of experienced investment bankers optimizes client outcomes by running competitive processes with well-informed, deep domain expertise

 Our Sector Expertise

## WORKTECH INDUSTRY COVERAGE



### HR Technology

- Talent Acquisition
- Talent Management
- Learning & Development
- Workforce Management
- Employer Of Record / PEO
- Field Service Management
- Regulatory Compliance
- Vendor Management Systems
- Core HR & Payroll
- Compensation, Benefits, Rewards
- Daily Pay
- Employee Wellbeing
- Case Management
- Employee Communications
- Project Management
- Occupational Safety



### Business Management

- Business Intelligence & Analytics
- ERP
- Finance & Accounting
- Bill Payment
- Subscription Management
- Operations Management
- CRM
- Budgeting & Forecasting
- Supply Chain Management
- Business Spend Management
- Practice Management
- Office Space Management



### Productivity

- Collaboration And Messaging
- Document Management
- Process Automation
- Workspace Management
- Video And Audio Communication
- Content Management
- Data Management
- Organizational Design

# International coverage

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We provide our clients with superior service and global coverage through colleagues and partners in the world's major financial hubs

Our main offices are:

## London

23 Berkeley Square  
London W1J 6HE

## Berlin

Europaplatz 2  
Berlin 10557

## Los Angeles

360 E 2nd St  
Los Angeles, CA 90012



# The financial advisor of choice for Future of Work businesses



We are incredibly proud to be the financial advisor of choice for Future of Work businesses globally. Our clients range from early-stage businesses and midsize companies to large, private-equity-backed, and publicly traded corporations. More WorkTech and HRTech companies trust Venero to deliver a successful M&A transaction than any other investment bank.

 View our extensive deal track record 

## SELECTED TRANSACTIONS

<p> Venero Capital Advisors is pleased to announce its role as joint financial advisor to</p> <p> on its sale to</p> <p></p>	<p> Venero Capital Advisors is pleased to announce its role as exclusive financial advisor to</p> <p> on its merger with</p> <p></p>	<p> Venero Capital Advisors is pleased to announce its role as exclusive financial advisor to</p> <p> on its sale to</p> <p></p>	<p> Venero Capital Advisors is pleased to announce its role as exclusive financial advisor to</p> <p> on its sale to</p> <p></p>	<p> Venero Capital Advisors is pleased to announce its role as joint financial advisor to</p> <p> a portfolio company of  on its €25M debt refinancing by</p> <p></p>	<p> Venero Capital Advisors is pleased to announce its role as joint financial advisor to</p> <p> on its sale to</p> <p></p>	<p> Venero Capital Advisors is pleased to announce its role as exclusive financial advisor to</p> <p> on its sale to</p> <p></p>	<p> Venero Capital Advisors is pleased to announce its role as exclusive financial advisor to</p> <p> a portfolio company of  on its sale to</p> <p></p>
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State of the Market in 3Q 2024

# Executive Summary



For the last two years, Work Tech businesses have been operating in a low-growth environment. That’s not surprising. Central banks have been raising interest rates to cool their economies. At its core, this translates into businesses gradually cutting spending and slowing down hiring, both of which affect the top-line of Work Tech vendors

In the context of M&A, this period of decelerating growth has impacted valuation multiples. Buyers had in any case already adjusted their approach to valuation, with double-digit revenue multiples becoming the exception rather than the norm even for assets with very strong performance. But now, many companies that come to market have almost eight quarters of steadily decelerating growth and increasing churn. And this tends to impact their valuation

On the other hand, Work Tech businesses that have maintained robust growth over this period are treated very differently, because they have demonstrated sticky customer demand even during a slowdown. Such businesses still transact at attractive multiples, and certainly at a significant premium to peers

The outlook for 2025 is positive, albeit improvement will be gradual. Top-line growth is still the primary valuation driver, combined with the company’s broader narrative, synergies and competitive positioning

## HOW WORK TECH COMPANIES ARE BEING ASSESSED

Top-Line Growth  
*ARR or Revenue*



Growth is still king, albeit not at any cost

Retention Metrics  
*GRR and NRR*



Crucial, esp. in the absence of above-average growth

Profitability  
*Cash EBITDA*



Cash EBITDA or path to profitability important in M&A, esp. for PE firms

Company Positioning  
*Competitive Outlook*



Narrative is crucial, but must be backed by robust KPI’s

Buyer Motivation  
*Synergies & Conviction*



The buyer with the most synergies will often outbid everyone else

# Public Markets Update

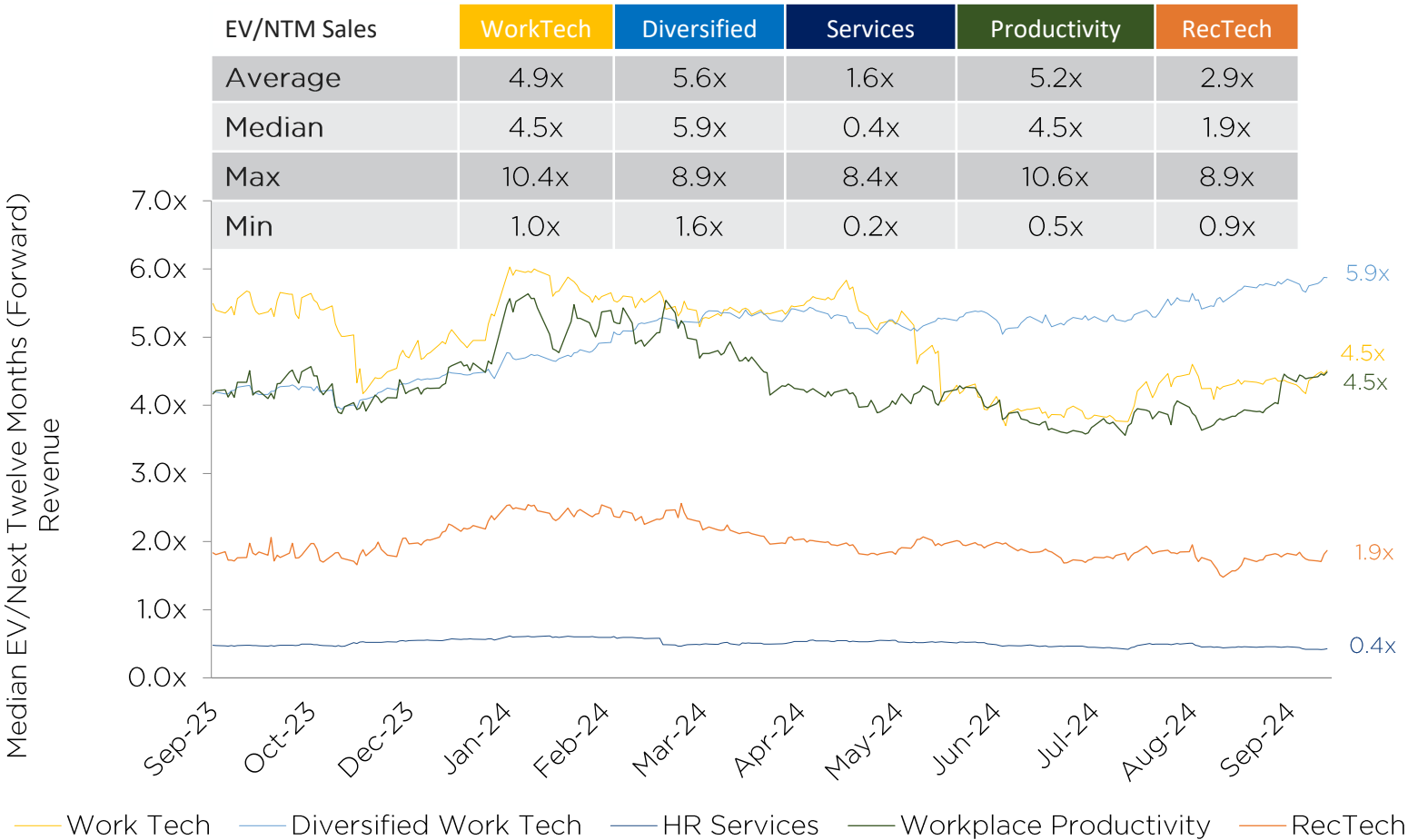
# Public peer valuation development



Public market valuations for Work Tech companies have shown notable stability over the past year, even as the broader technology sector experiences a recovery

This performance can largely be attributed to the tempered growth outlook for the sector. Analysts project that revenue growth for HR Tech and Work Tech will not accelerate in the near term, with 2025 forecasts in line with 2024

This is particularly significant when contrasted with the robust growth seen in 2023, where most companies in the sector enjoyed almost twice as high revenue growth



Source: Google Finance and Investing.com, Venero Capital Advisors analysis

## Revenue growth benchmarking

	COMPANY	YOY REVENUE GROWTH <sup>(a)</sup>				CAGR
		2022	2023	2024 E	2025 E	2023-25 E
WORK TECH	ATOSS	17%	33%	15%	15%	15%
	Intuit	23%	13%	13%	12%	13%
	Workday	21%	17%	16%	14%	15%
	Dayforce	22%	22%	15%	13%	14%
	Paylocity	36%	27%	13%	10%	12%
	Docebo	38%	26%	19%	16%	18%
	Paycom	30%	23%	10%	11%	11%
	Sage	7%	11%	8%	8%	8%
	First Advantage	-4%	1%	7%	8%	8%
	Paycor	26%	23%	14%	11%	13%
	Freshworks	34%	19%	19%	17%	18%
	Asure Software	26%	25%	6%	9%	7%
	Udemy	22%	16%	7%	8%	7%
	Median	23%	22%	13%	11%	13%

2024 proved to be challenging for many Work Tech businesses, with median revenue growth rates reducing by nearly 50% compared to the post-COVID highs of 2022

This significant decline underscores the broader economic environment shaped by central bank policies aimed at curbing inflation. By raising interest rates, central banks sought to temper economic activity, which in turn has had a direct impact on business spending

Many organizations have become more cautious with their budgets, slowing down hiring and limiting the purchase of business software

(a) Calendarized to December  
Source: Analyst forecasts



## Revenue growth benchmarking (cont.)

	COMPANY	YOY REVENUE GROWTH <sup>(a)</sup>				CAGR
		2022	2023	2024 E	2025 E	2023-25 E
RECRUITMENT TECH	Seek	24%	-4%	-6%	6%	0%
	Recruit	21%	4%	2%	6%	4%
	Fiverr	13%	7%	6%	10%	8%
	ZipRecruiter	22%	-29%	-28%	10%	-11%
	Upwork	23%	11%	7%	5%	6%
	Freelancer	-3%	-4%	-3%	4%	0%
	DHI	25%	2%	-6%	-1%	-3%
	Median	22%	2%	-3%	6%	0%
DIVERSIFIED WORK TECH	Oracle	12%	10%	8%	11%	10%
	SAP	11%	1%	8%	11%	10%
	ADP	10%	8%	6%	5%	6%
	Upland Software	5%	-6%	-7%	-3%	-5%
	Median	10%	4%	7%	8%	8%

The last two years marked a significant downturn for recruitment companies, following the hiring surge post COVID. Faced with economic uncertainties and higher operational costs, many employers implemented hiring freezes or reduced recruitment efforts, resulting in YoY revenue declines for many Recruitment Tech vendors

After two difficult years, the situation may be improving in 2025, with low-single-digit growth expected for most of the sector

Diversified Work Tech vendors, meanwhile, have fared better, exhibiting greater resilience largely due to their diverse offering and focus on enterprise customers

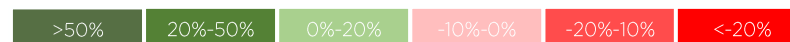
## Revenue growth benchmarking (cont.)

		YOY REVENUE GROWTH <sup>(a)</sup>				CAGR
COMPANY		2022	2023	2024 E	2025 E	2023-25 E
HR SERVICES	Paychex	11%	7%	5%	5%	5%
	Healthstream	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%
	Zalaris	15%	27%	16%	10%	13%
	TriNet	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
	Insperty	20%	9%	2%	7%	4%
	Randstad	12%	-8%	-5%	4%	-1%
	Adecco	13%	1%	-1%	3%	1%
	Manpower	-4%	-5%	-5%	3%	-1%
	TrueBlue	4%	-15%	-18%	-1%	-9%
	Median	11%	5%	2%	5%	4%

For HR Services businesses, revenue growth remained subdued in 2024, in line with the slowdown in hiring. Recruitment businesses like TrueBlue, Randstad and Manpower have been particularly impacted

The outlook for 2025 appears to be improving, however, with median growth in the low single digits

(a) Calendarized to December  
Source: Analyst forecasts



## Revenue growth benchmarking (cont.)

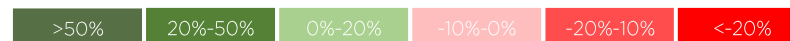


	COMPANY	YOY REVENUE GROWTH <sup>(a)</sup>				CAGR
		2022	2023	2024 E	2025 E	2023-25 E
WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY	Monday.com	69%	40%	32%	27%	29%
	Hubspot	33%	25%	18%	16%	17%
	Atlassian	30%	25%	19%	18%	19%
	Salesforce	19%	12%	9%	9%	9%
	Smartsheet	39%	26%	17%	15%	16%
	Box	13%	5%	5%	6%	6%
	DocuSign	21%	10%	7%	6%	6%
	Dropbox	8%	7%	2%	2%	2%
	Asana	46%	21%	11%	12%	11%
	Zoom	10%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	ON24	-6%	-14%	-10%	-1%	-6%
	Median	21%	12%	9%	9%	9%

The performance Workplace Productivity vendors has been more robust than their HR Tech peers, although they too have been reporting growth rates that are almost half those of 2022

Based on analyst forecasts, revenue growth next year will remain at the high single digit levels, similar to what is being reported in 2024

(a) Calendarized to December  
Source: Analyst forecasts

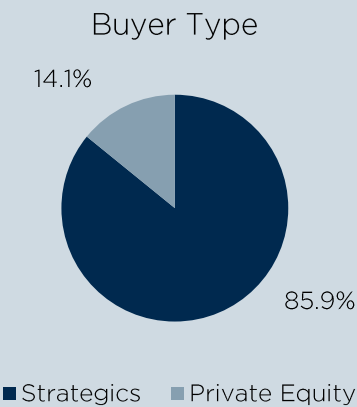


# M&A Update

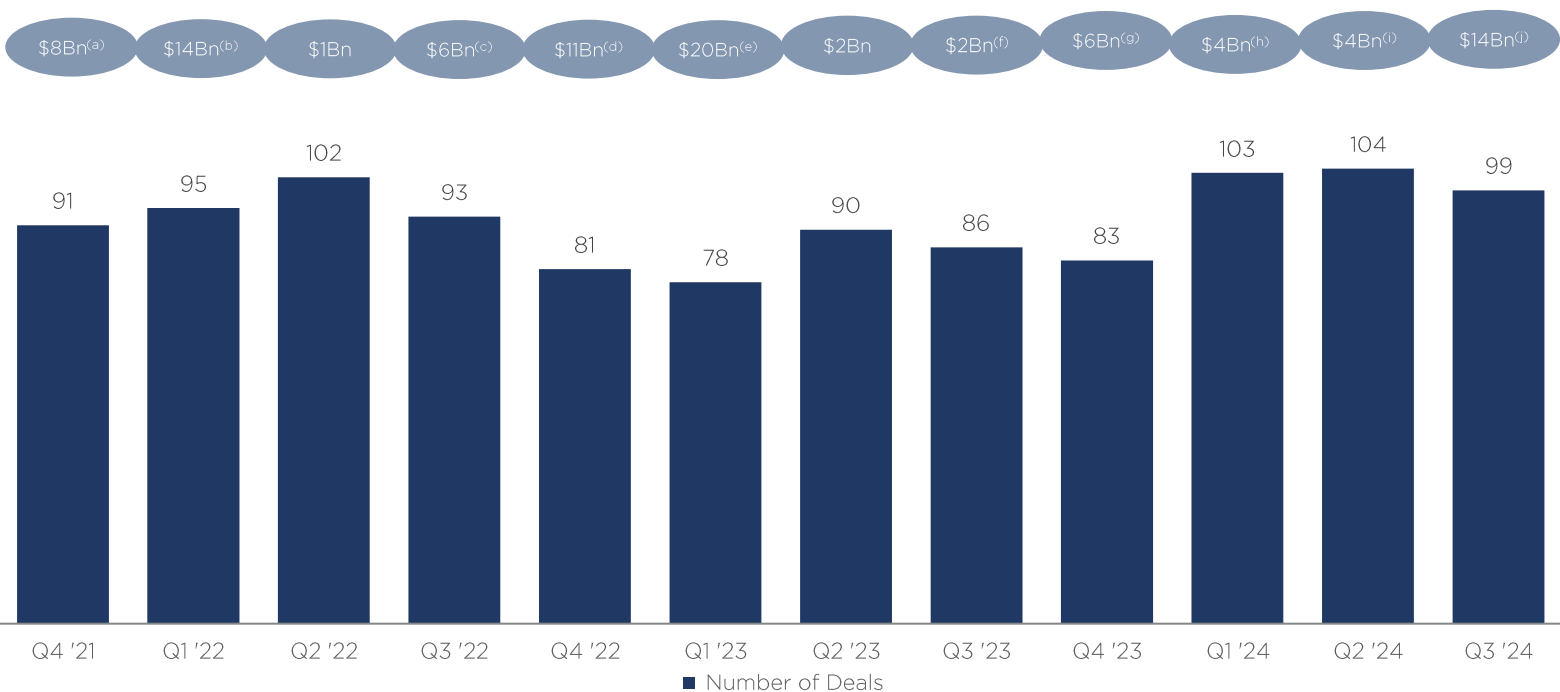
# WorkTech M&A trends



M&A activity YTD has been very robust, with 336 acquisitions in total during the first three quarters. This puts 2024 on track for record deal volumes. Both PE firms and PE-backed strategies have been active acquirers



WORK TECH M&A VOLUME AND VALUE



Note: Disclosed deal values only  
(a) Includes acquisition of Cornerstone OnDemand by Clearlake Capital (\$6.1Bn); (b) Includes acquisition of Anaplan by Thoma Bravo (\$10.5Bn); (c) Includes acquisition of Frontline Education by Roper Technologies (\$3.7Bn) and acquisition of LifeWorks by Telus (\$1.7Bn); (d) Includes acquisition of Coupa Software by Thoma Bravo (\$8.0Bn); (e) Includes acquisition of Knowbe4 by Vista (\$4.6Bn) and acquisition of Qualtrics by Silver Lake (\$12.5Bn) and acquisition of Works Human Intelligence by GIC (\$2.6Bn); (f) Includes acquisition of Kahoot! by Goldman Sachs (\$1.7Bn); (g) Includes acquisition of Iris by Leonard Green & Partners (\$4.0Bn); (h) Includes acquisition of Sterling by First Advantage (\$2.2Bn); (i) Includes acquisition of Zellis by APAX partners (\$1.6Bn) and acquisition of WalkMe by SAP (\$1.5Bn); ; (j) Includes acquisition of Instructure by KKR (\$4.5Bn) and acquisition of Spreadsheet by Blackstone and Vista Equity Partners (\$8.4Bn)  
Source: Press reports as of 4 October 2024, Venero Capital Advisors analysis

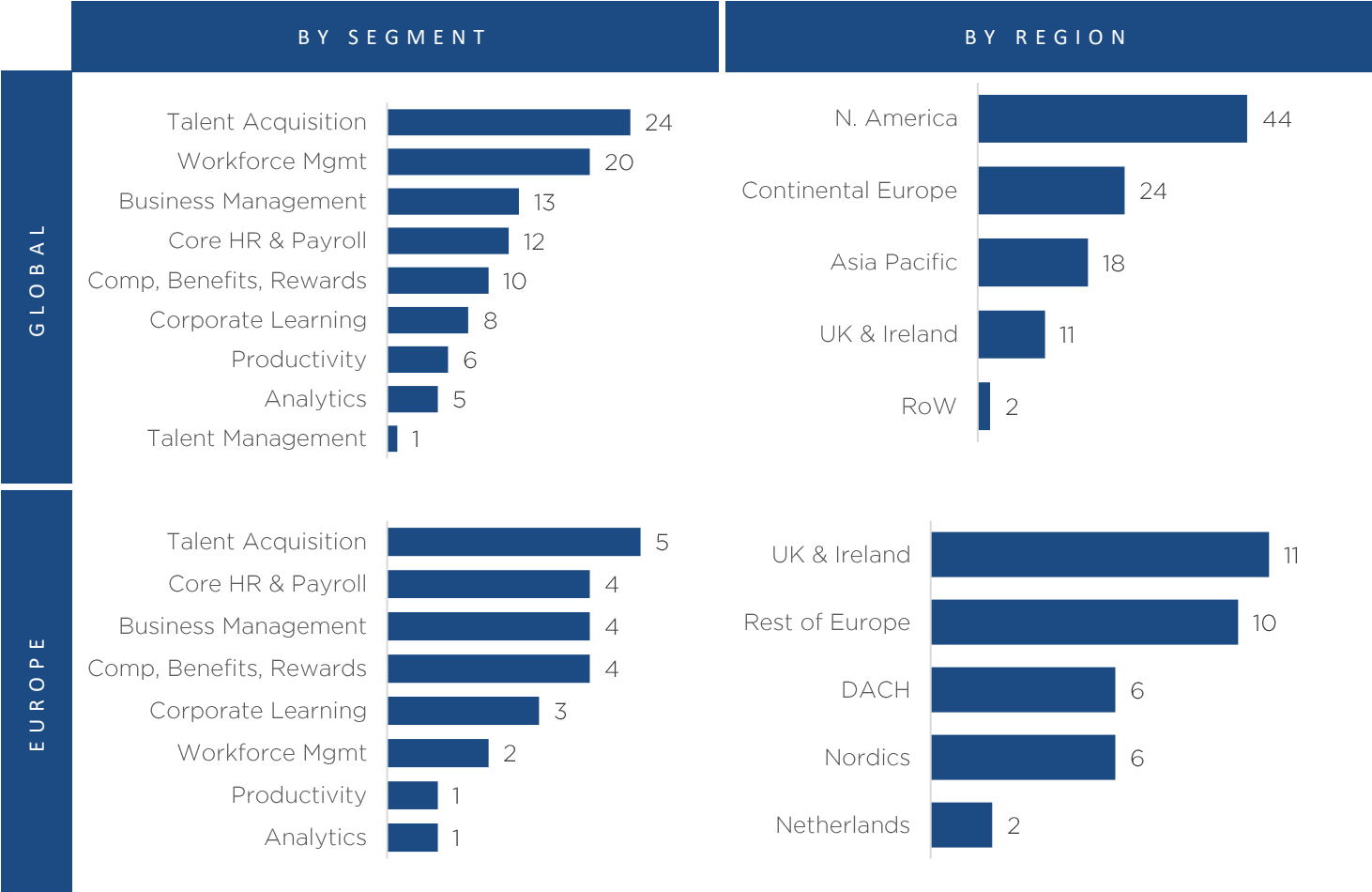
# WorkTech M&A trends (cont.)



Talent Acquisition led the way in consolidation during Q3, maintaining its position as the most dynamic segment within Work Tech. This is despite the difficult LTM numbers reported by most recruitment vendors and highlights the market’s large potential and continuous innovation

The second most active segment was Workforce Management, which has been a focus for both investors and acquirers in recent years – especially as it pertains to frontline workers

Q3 M&A ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN BY SEGMENT AND GEOGRAPHY

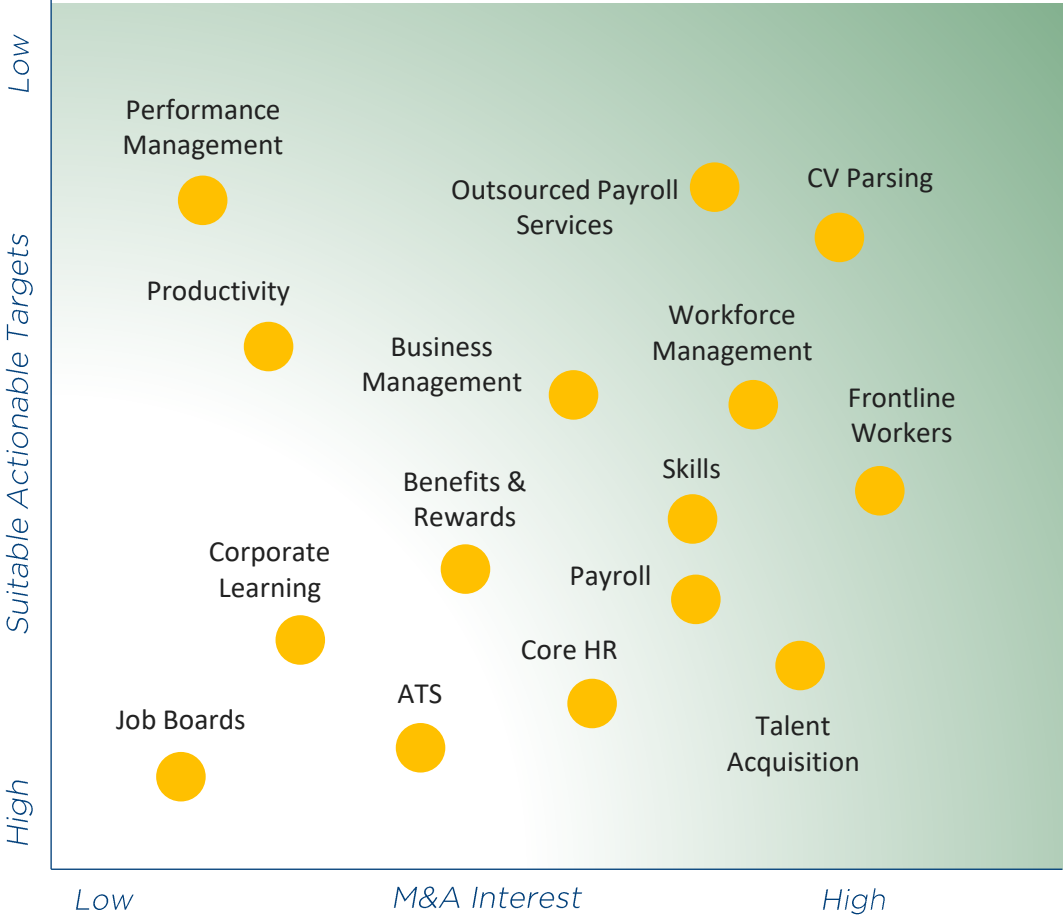


Source: Company information, press, Venero Capital Advisors analysis

# 2024 M&A Activity Map



M&A INTEREST VS. AVAILABILITY OF TARGETS



Workforce Management is a major theme for both growth equity firms and strategic acquirers. There are several parameters to this, such as size of target customers, geographical focus, breath of functionality, etc. Time & attendance, shift scheduling, communication and engagement of deskless workers, as well as sourcing of workers are areas of particular interest.

Talent acquisition has long been the most active segment for M&A, and it encompasses areas such as talent sourcing, candidate engagement, onboarding, recruitment marketing, etc. CV parsing is worth calling out separately, due to the scarcity of actionable targets compared to buyer interest, particularly from strategics

Skills has by now firmly established itself as a core element of HR Technology, both as it relates to employees and candidates

Lastly, core HR businesses as well as in-country payroll solutions are in demand, including outsourced payroll services that are particularly attractive to growth equity firms

# Development of M&A valuation multiples



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Valuation multiples for Work Tech companies contracted further in 2024 YTD, with the average now sitting at 4.2x EV/LTM Revenue

This is highly correlated to the sector's performance over the past two years. Buyers are less willing to put a high premium on businesses facing headwinds

However, companies that have continued to perform well are still valued at a premium, and demand from potential acquirers is significant

## VALUATION MULTIPLES REFLECT THE DECELERATING GROWTH RATES

- In 2022, Work Tech businesses benefited from the post-COVID recovery, which drove a surge in demand. However, as momentum slowed in 2023 and further into 2024, growth for companies of all sizes began to decelerate. This downward trend has been persisting for two years and many companies report a multi-quarter trend of increasing churn and reduced net revenue retention
- Since there is a very strong correlation between M&A valuation and top-line growth, this prolonged period of weakening performance is impacting valuation multiples
- Buyers are disciplined and don't place a high premium on businesses facing headwinds. Meanwhile, sellers may choose to transact due to the limited appeal of alternatives. Some have been delaying an exit since 2020, when M&A went into a tailspin. Besides, it could take another 12-24 months for companies to establish a track record that is both sufficiently positive and sufficiently long to command higher multiples. Adding to that the typical duration of an M&A process, waiting for a higher (potential) multiple could mean waiting for another 2+ years
- The decision to wait of course carries its own risks. Firstly, a higher multiple in the future is not guaranteed. Secondly, equity and debt financing conditions are improving, but slowly, and many companies have exhausted cap tables. This means they may need to rely on punitive equity raises or expensive debt for growth capital, or face cash constraints that could hinder expansion
- For companies that have performed well in the last two years, the situation is different. Having demonstrated resilience and strong demand from customers even amidst tightening budgets, they attract significant interest from potential acquirers and are valued at a premium to peers

# M&A valuation multiples over time

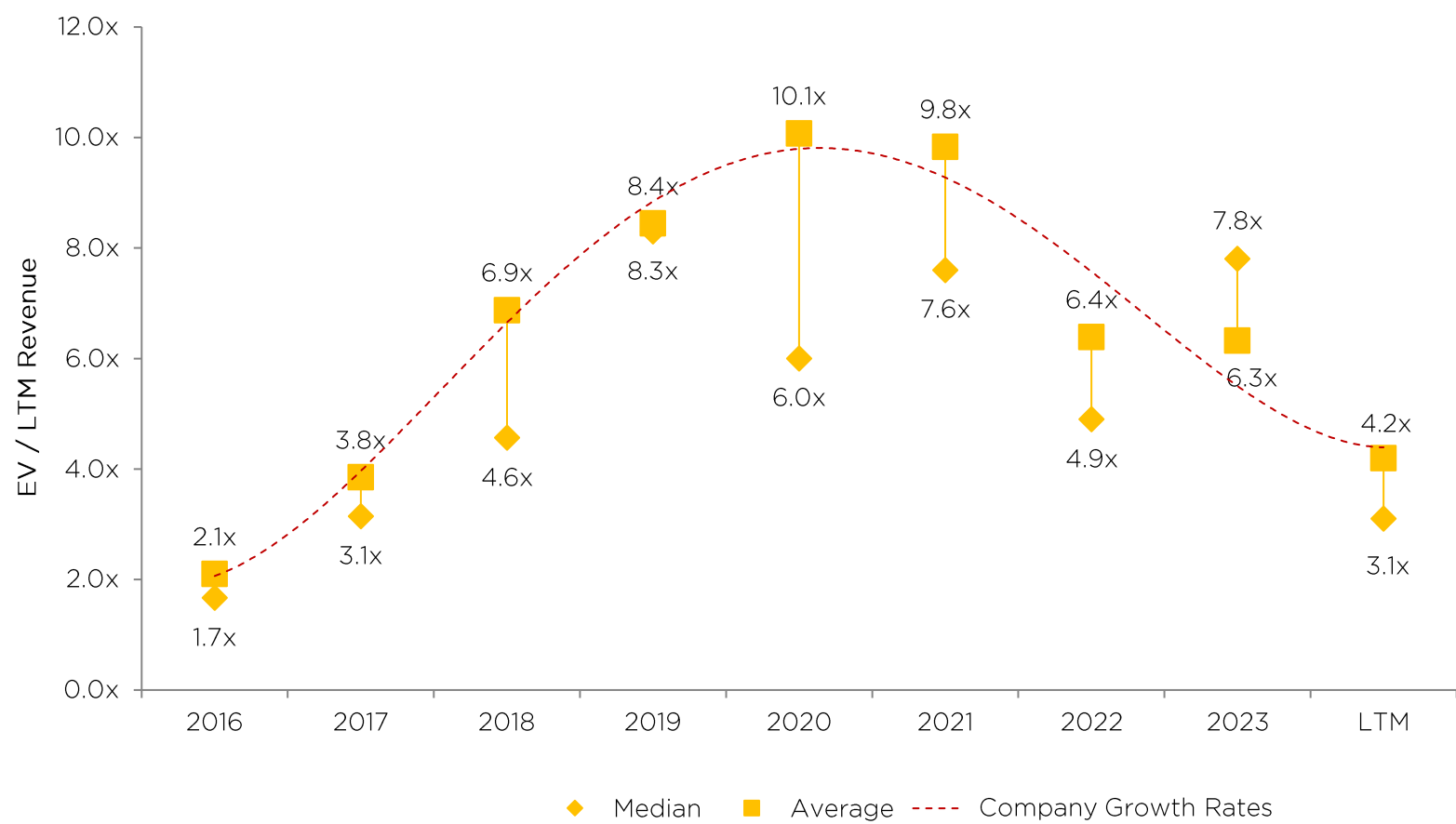


Top-line growth is the main valuation driver in M&A. The pullback in M&A multiples reflects the deceleration of YoY revenue growth that Work Tech companies have been experiencing

In 2022, typical revenue growth for a growth stage business was north of 60%. In 2023 this decelerated to c. 40%, and in 2024 YTD it has dropped by almost 50% compared to 2022, with a similar outlook for 2025. Recruitment Tech businesses have been affected most of all

Still, companies that have maintained robust CAGR's are attracting strong interest from potential acquirers. Their KPI's signal resilient customer demand, so they can be valued at a significant premium vs. peers

VALUATION MULTIPLES IMPACTED BY LOWER LTM<sup>(a)</sup> GROWTH



(a) LTM = Last Twelve Months

Source: Company information, press, Venero Capital Advisors analysis

# Main drivers of valuation



## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NARRATIVE

In the context of M&A, the factors that drive valuation for Work Tech businesses are both qualitative and quantitative. Combined, they form the narrative that acquirers ultimately evaluate

Qualitative factors are crucial for both strategic and financial buyers, as they provide context for the quantitative aspects of the business. In their absence, numerical KPI's would be assessed in a vacuum and would likely present an incomplete view of the situation

## KEY QUALITATIVE FACTORS

- Technology and product differentiation
- Customer base and reasons for churn
- Barriers to entry and competitive landscape
- Proof points for future growth
- Execution risks and uncertainties
- Strength of management team
- Strategic fit and synergies, for strategic acquirers

## KEY QUANTITATIVE FACTORS

	Revenue Growth	– Expectation varies by company size
	Gross Revenue Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Enterprise: &gt; 95%</li><li>– SMB: &gt; 85%</li><li>– Long tail: &gt; 75%</li></ul>
	Net Revenue Retention	– > 105%
	Profitability, or profitable fundamentals and clear path to breakeven	– Potential to achieve 20%+ EBITDA margin
(X)	“Rule of X”, whereby top-line growth is assessed in the context of EBITDA margin	– Varies based on narrative, but “Rule of 40” remains common

## 3Q 2024 selected M&amp;A transactions



Date	Target	Acquirer	Date	Target	Acquirer	Date	Target	Acquirer
Jul-24	DIE JOBMACHER	Private Assets SE	Aug-24	Kidling	KITALINO	Sep-24	SwipeGuide	L2L
Jul-24	LEFTA Systems	Lexipol	Aug-24	TempoPay	PayMedix	Sep-24	Onboarded	The Access Group
Jul-24	HRaspirin	Star Alliance	Aug-24	HUMANOO	Telus	Sep-24	smartAI	The Access Group
Jul-24	GoContractor	Safety Plus	Aug-24	Epicor	CVC	Sep-24	RHGestor	Solides
Jul-24	eSkill	Scaleworks	Aug-24	GreytHR	Apax	Sep-24	TZA	Easy Metrics
Jul-24	eComply Solutions	B2Gnow	Aug-24	Hiringmaps	PINTAR	Sep-24	AbsenceSoft	Luminate Capital
Jul-24	INX Software	Accel-KKR	Aug-24	Livehire	Humanforce	Sep-24	SalaryFits	Serasa
Jul-24	Instructure	KKR	Aug-24	HIRECLICK	Asure	Sep-24	SkillBurst	BARBRI
Jul-24	Karamel	Noel Franklin	Aug-24	RippleWorx	Bow River Capital	Sep-24	Smartsheet	Vista
Jul-24	PurpleHRM	Vinci	Aug-24	GFOS	Riverside	Sep-24	Paybooks	TransPerfect

# Investment Activity Update

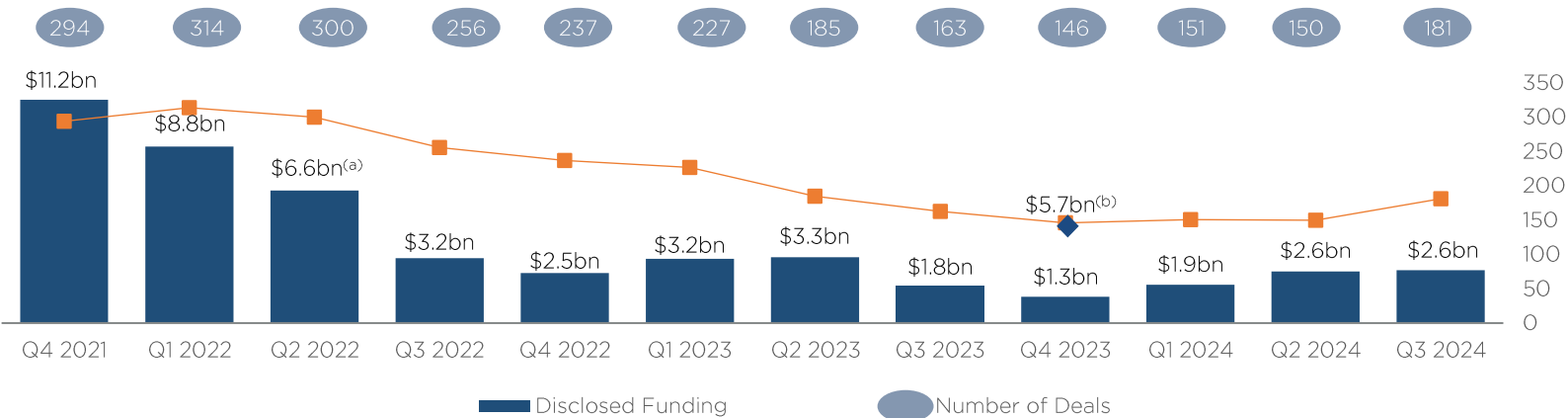
# Investment activity highlights

Investment activity by volume picked up around 20% in Q3, with 181 deals disclosed vs. 150 in Q2. Growth came primarily from early-stage rounds, resulting in an average investment size of €18.1m

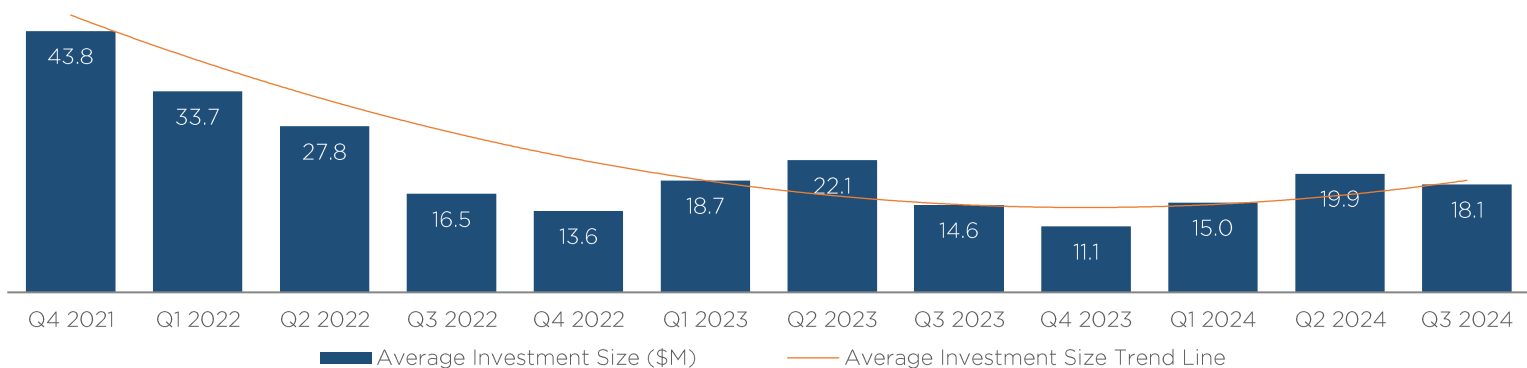
In the broader technology sector, much of the VC activity centers around AI. However, for Work Tech it is the structural industry trends that continue to dominate the narrative. AI capabilities typically complement what is an otherwise an already solid investment thesis with strong KPI's

Funding volume was stable quarter-on-quarter, with around \$2.6bn invested in the sector

QUARTERLY INVESTMENTS INTO WORK TECH (GLOBAL)



AVERAGE INVESTMENT SIZE



Note: Disclosed deal values only

(a) Includes investment of \$1.3Bn in The Access Group; (b) Reflects investment of €4.0bn (\$4.4bn) in Visma (outlier)

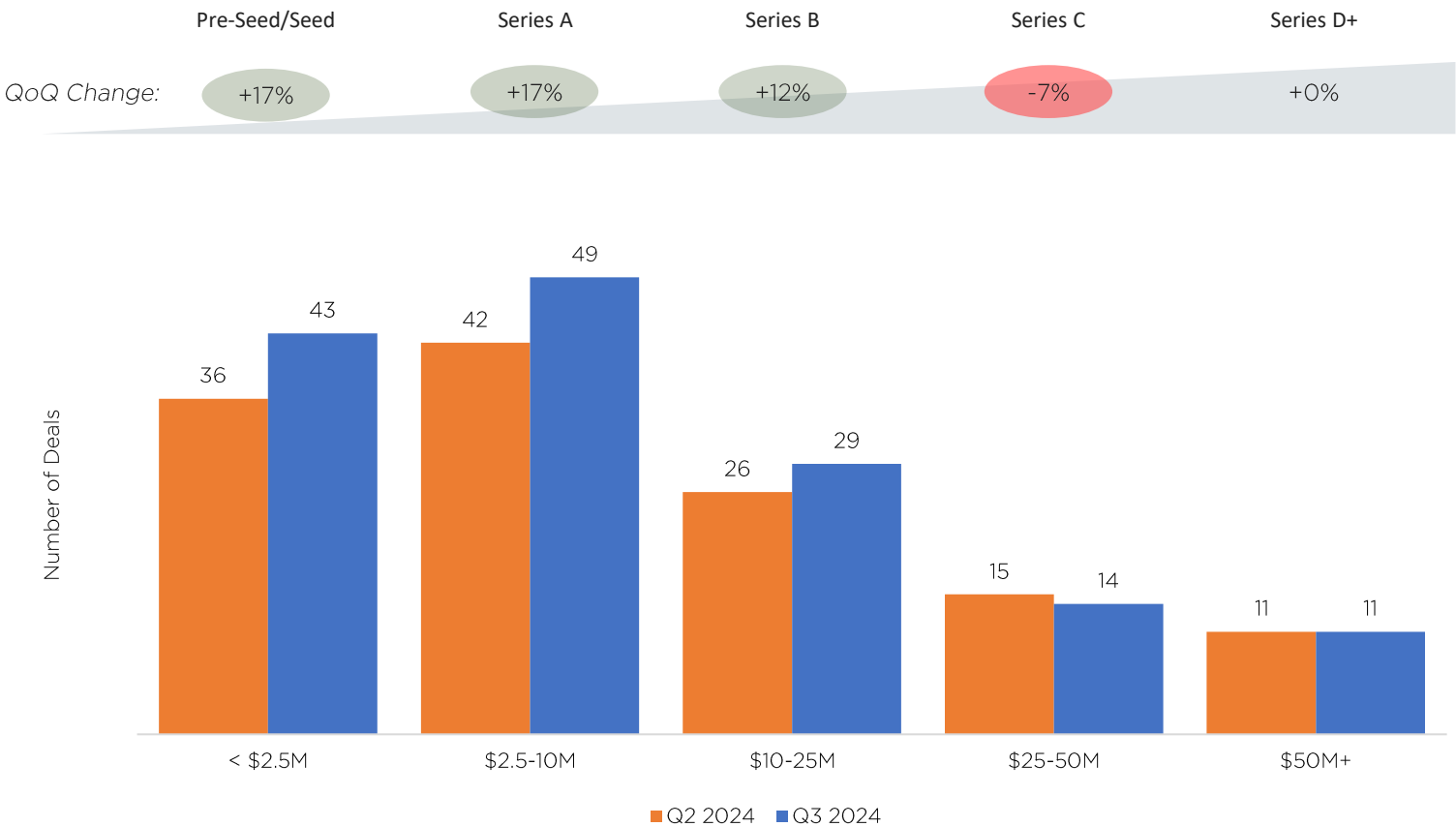
Source: Press reports as of 4 October 2024, Venero Capital Advisors analysis

# Investment volume by deal size

Q3 saw an uptick in early-stage funding rounds, particularly in the sub-\$10M range. Talent Acquisition was the most popular category, followed by Benefits & Rewards, Productivity, Business Management and WFM

This is an encouraging development, as it reflects investor confidence in the potential for early-stage startups to make an impact on the Future of Work

Importantly, the number of later-stage rounds (\$25M+) did not decline either – an indication that established businesses continue to gain market share versus the large incumbents

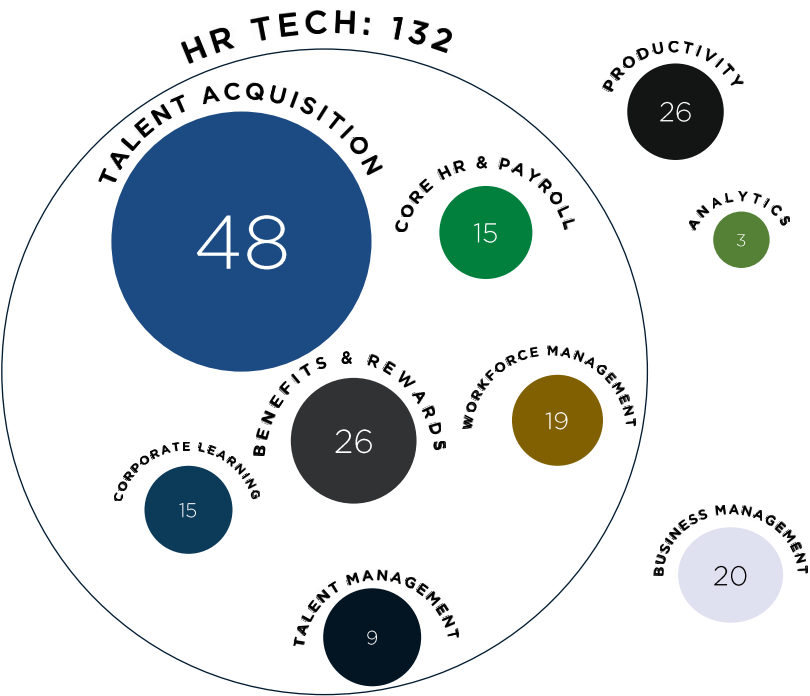


Note: Disclosed deal values only  
Source: Press reports as of 4 October 2024, Venero Capital Advisors analysis

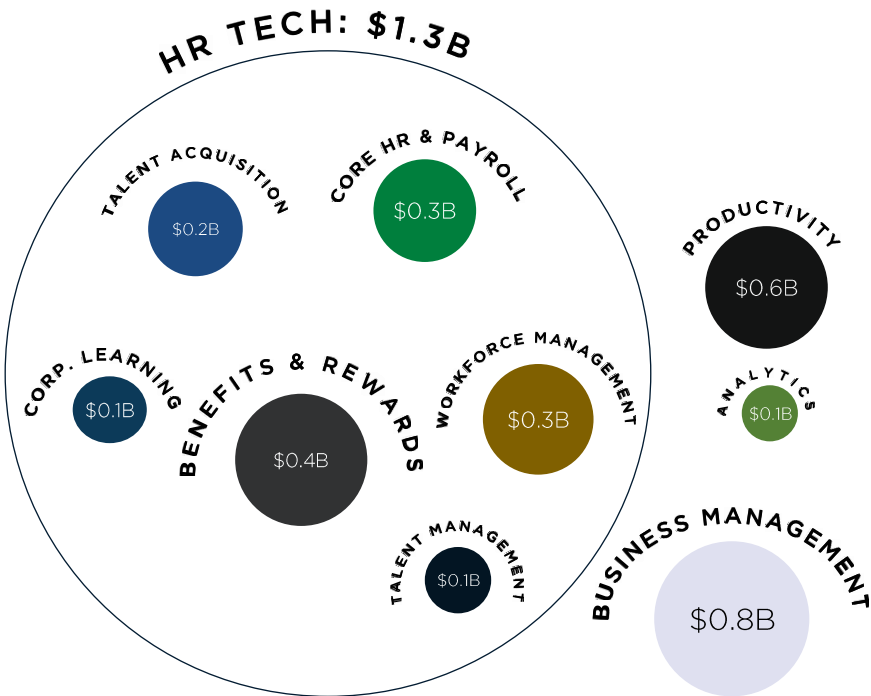
# 3Q 2024 Investment activity by segment



NUMBER OF FUNDING ROUNDS: 181



AMOUNT RAISED: \$2.6BN

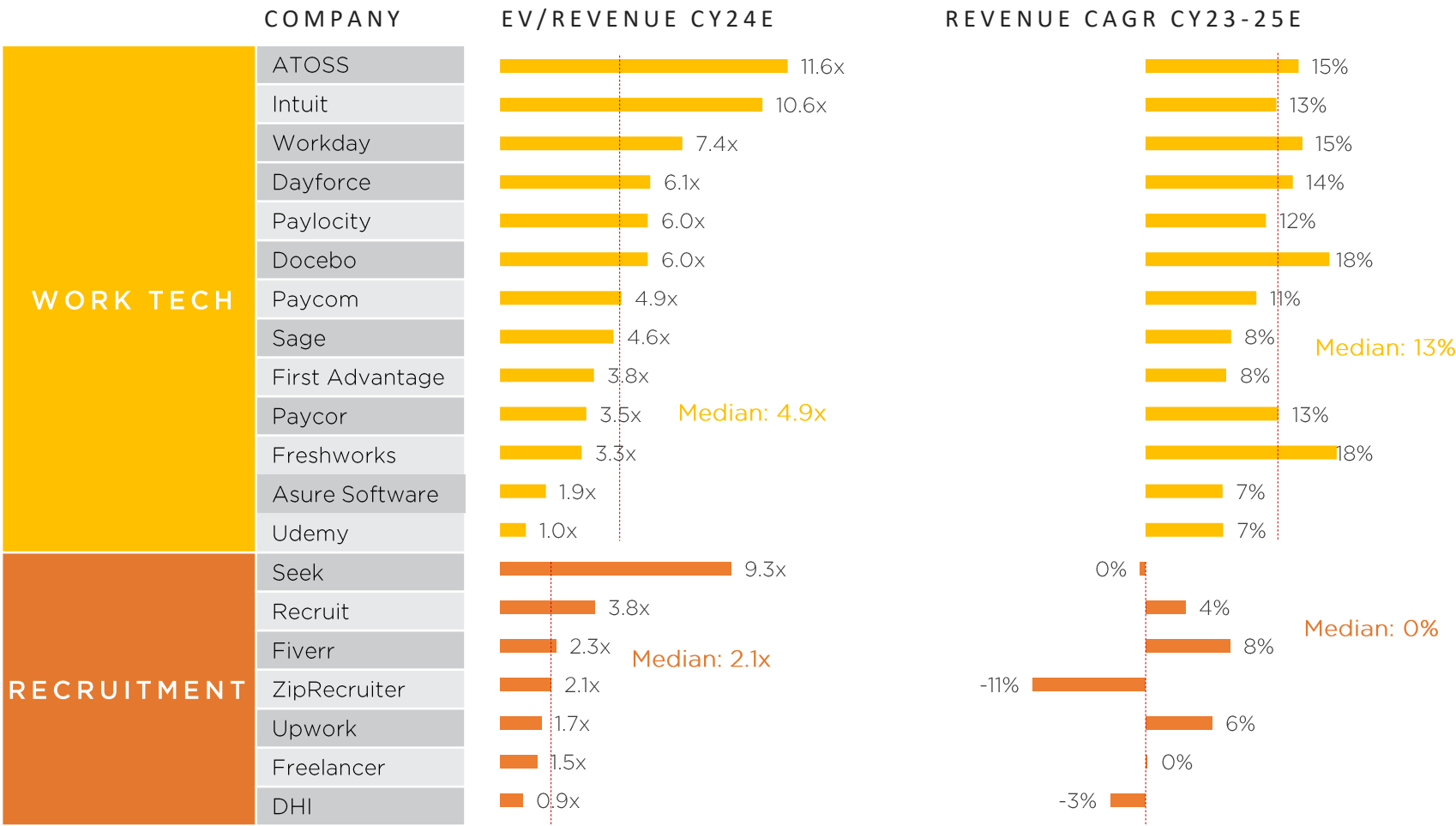


## 3Q 2024 selected funding rounds, by size

Date	Company	Amount (\$m) ▼	Date	Company	Amount (\$m) ▼	Date	Company	Amount (\$m) ▼
Sep-24	Glean	260.0	Aug-24	Onebrief	53.0	Sep-24	Mercor	30.0
Jul-24	Altana AI	200.0	Sep-24	finally	50.0	Sep-24	Apron	30.0
Sep-24	EGYM	200.0	Jul-24	HERO	43.2	Sep-24	TeamBridge	28.0
Jul-24	Hebbia	130.0	Aug-24	Cents	40.0	Jul-24	Trio Mobil	26.5
Aug-24	CloudPay	120.0	Sep-24	Thatch	38.0	Sep-24	Onsurity	26.4
Sep-24	SafetyCulture	111.3	Jul-24	Ema	36.0	Sep-24	Orb	25.0
Jul-24	Spring Health	100.0	Sep-24	Mangomint	35.0	Sep-24	11x	24.0
Sep-24	Virtuous	100.0	Aug-24	Attio	33.0	Aug-24	Cardboard	23.8
Aug-24	ShareCRM	75.0	Aug-24	PayZen	32.0	Sep-24	Every	22.5
Sep-24	Oyster	59.0	Aug-24	Yuze Digital	30.0	Sep-24	AceUp	22.5

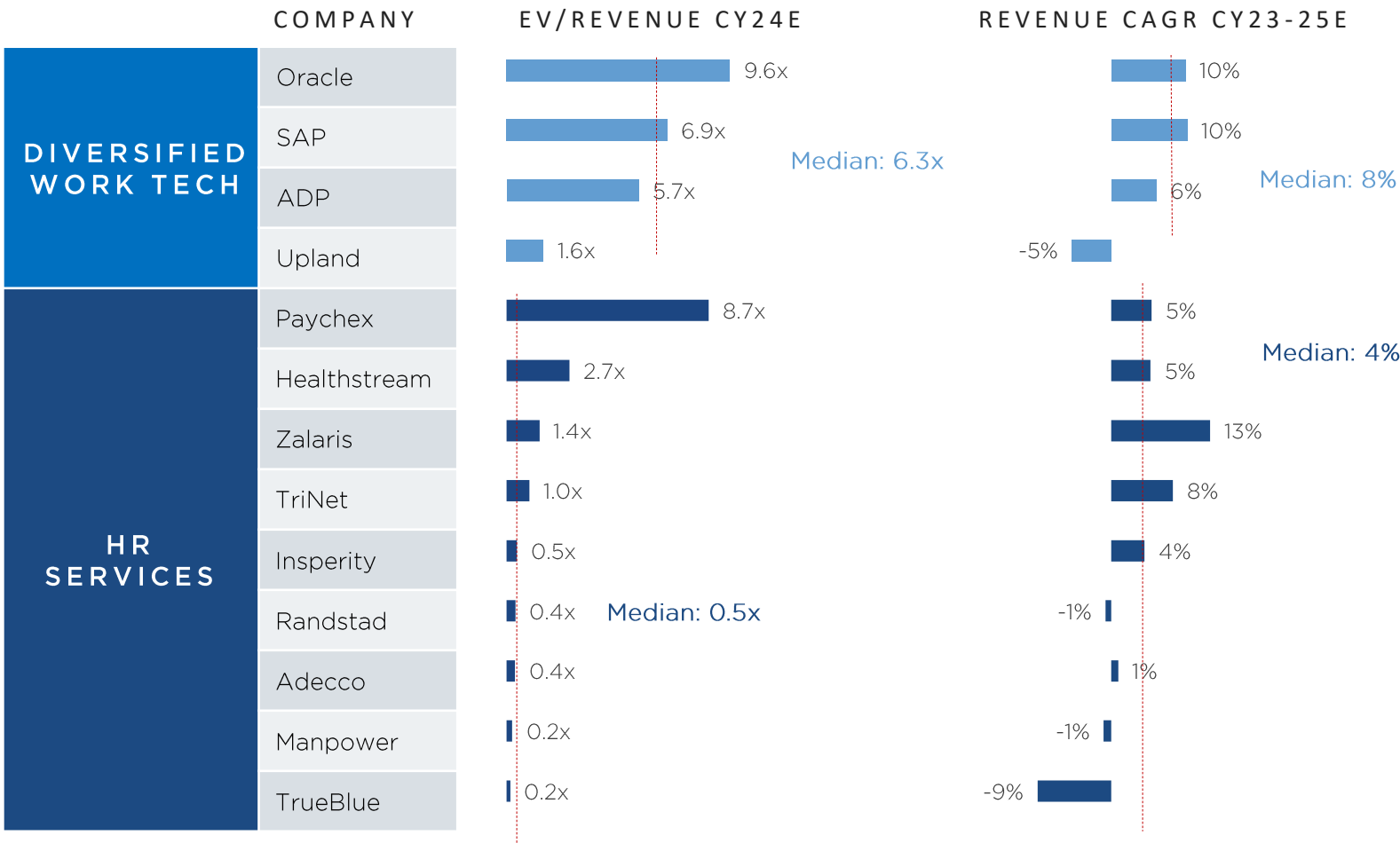
# Appendix: Public Companies Benchmarking

Peer benchmarking: valuation & revenue growth (cont.)



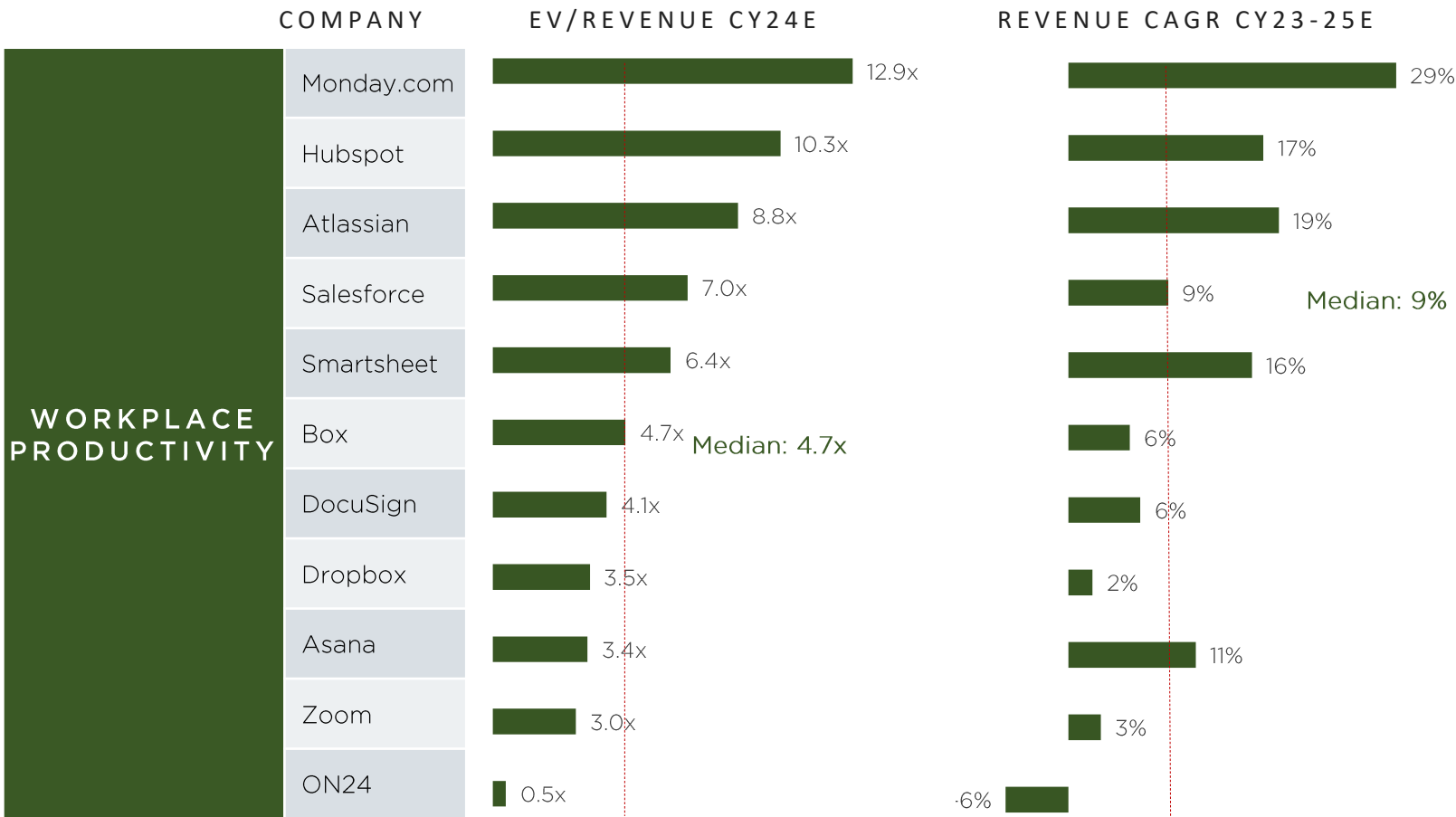
Source: Venero Capital Advisors analysis, September 2024

Peer benchmarking: valuation & revenue growth (cont.)



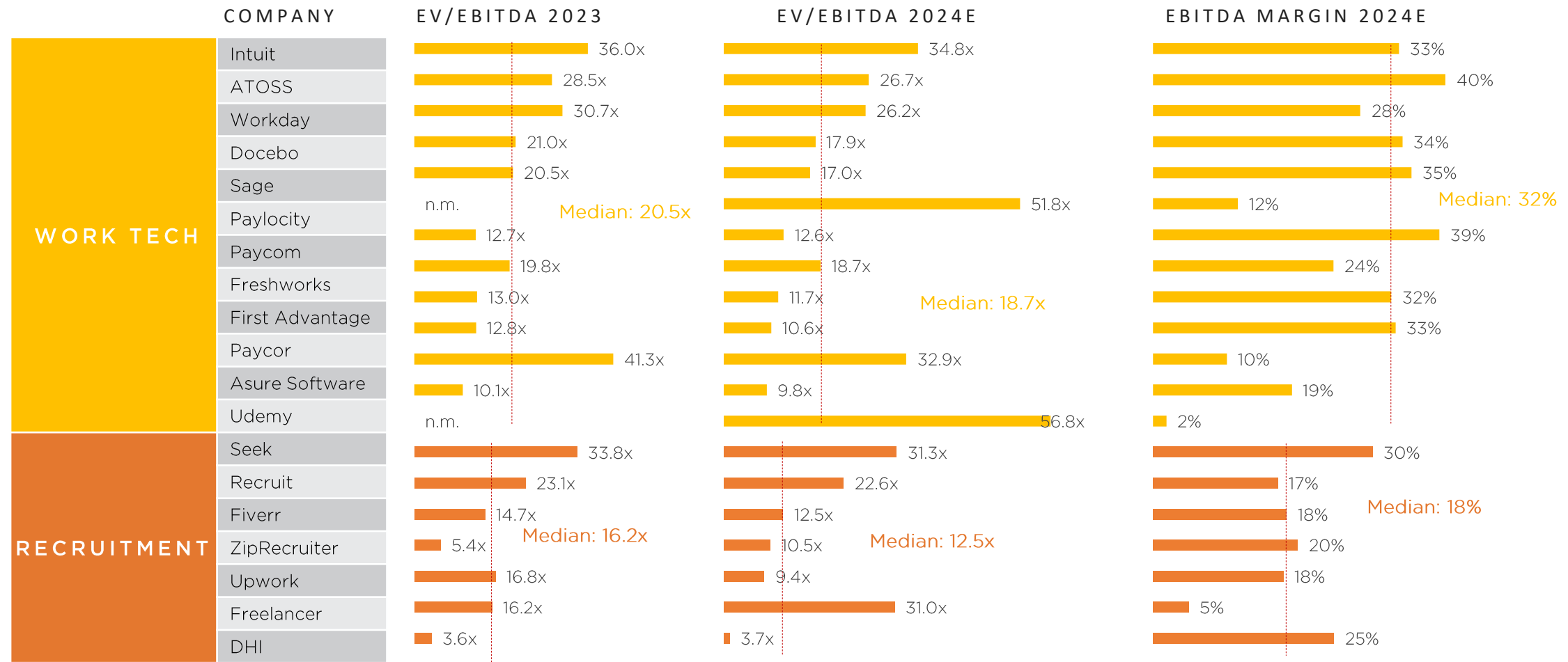
Source: Venero Capital Advisors analysis, September 2024

# Peer benchmarking: valuation & revenue growth (cont.)

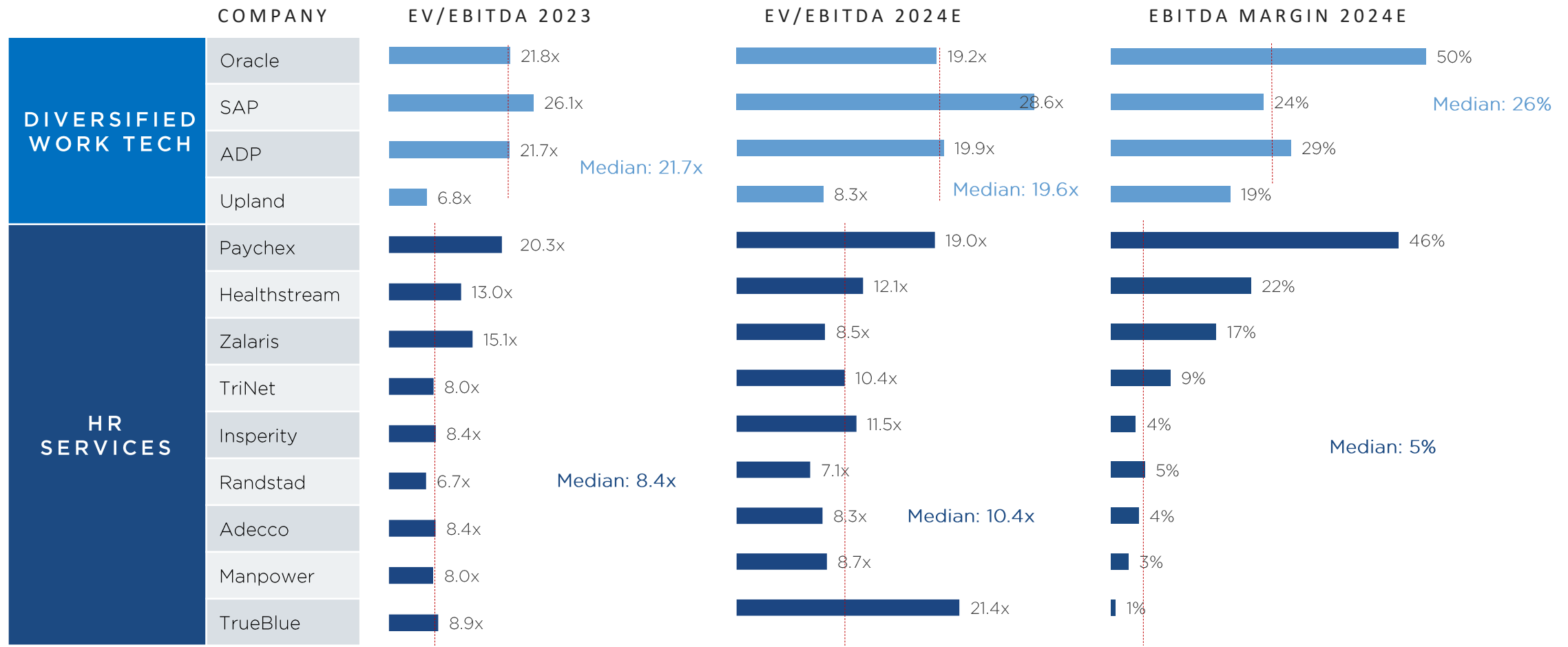


Source: Venero Capital Advisors analysis, September 2024

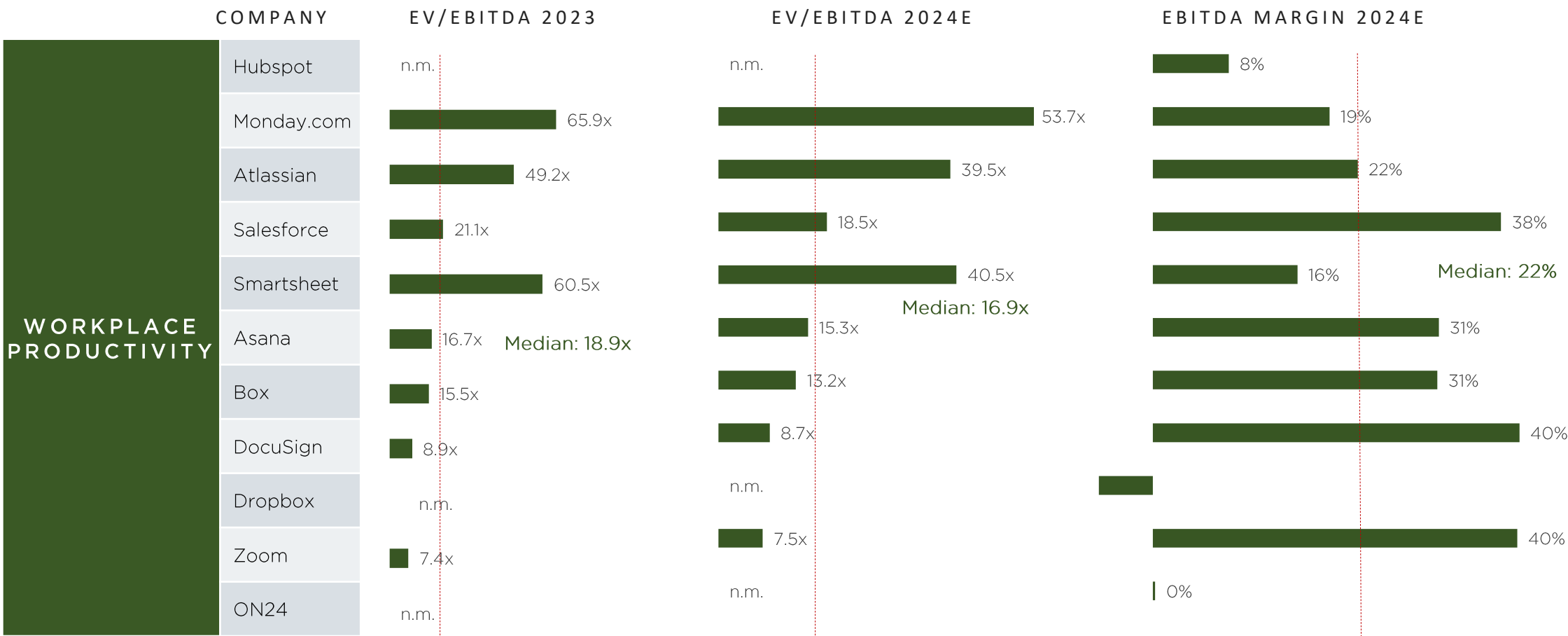
# Peer benchmarking: valuation & revenue growth (cont.)



## Peer benchmarking: valuation &amp; revenue growth (cont.)



# Peer benchmarking: valuation & revenue growth (cont.)



Source: Venero Capital Advisors analysis, September 2024

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