PE DEAL TEAMS · THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

The Top 7 Things a PE Deal Team Member Can Get Out of Dakota Marketplace

Private equity runs on information asymmetry. Here's how the most complete private markets database gives your deal team a structural edge — from sourcing to close.

117K+	20K+	50K+	28
PORTFOLIO COMPANIES	GPS TRACKED	FUNDS COVERED	YEARS OF DATA

GC **Gui Costin**
Founder & CEO, Dakota

I n private equity, the edge is almost never the model. Every serious deal team can build a DCF. Every firm has access to the same public filings, the same industry reports, the same management presentation. What separates the firms that consistently win — and more importantly, consistently avoid the deals they shouldn't do — is what they know before the process officially starts.

That is an information problem. And for 28 years, it's been one of the hardest problems in the business to solve. Private markets don't have a Bloomberg terminal. There's no central exchange where GP activity, sponsor ownership, fund performance, and LP commitments are aggregated in real time.

Dakota Marketplace was built specifically to solve that problem. With 117,000+ sponsor-backed portfolio companies, 20,000+ GPs, 50,000+ funds, comprehensive LP data, and private fund performance figures, it gives PE deal teams a structural intelligence advantage at every stage of the lifecycle. Here are the seven most valuable use cases.

THE SEVEN USE CASES

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01 Deal Sourcing

PROPRIETARY DEAL FLOW BEFORE THE PROCESS STARTS

The most valuable deals in PE are the ones that never reach a formal auction. By the time an investment bank has sent out a teaser and organized a process, the pricing is efficient and the information advantage is gone. The firms that win consistently are the ones who found the company two years before the banker called.

Dakota's 117,000+ sponsor-backed portfolio company database is built for exactly this kind of proactive sourcing. Deal teams can mine by sector, sub-sector, geography, current sponsor, and — critically — estimated hold period. A company that's been in a PE firm's portfolio for six or seven years is statistically approaching an exit. Knowing that before the banker does is the entire game.

Proprietary sourcing isn't about calling more people. It's about knowing which people to call, and why, before anyone else does.

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> *The firm that finds the target first wins. Dakota shows you where to look.*

» **117K+ SPONSOR-BACKED PORTFOLIO COMPANIES**

02   ## Competitive Intelligence

KNOWING WHO ELSE IS IN THE ROOM BEFORE YOU BID

Every PE auction has a clearing price, and that price is set by the most aggressive bidder — not the most rational one. Understanding who your competition is before you submit an IOI is one of the most important inputs to bid calibration, and it's one of the hardest pieces of information to get.

Dakota changes that. By tracking GP activity across deal size, sector, geography, and investment velocity, deal teams can build a credible picture of who is likely in a given process before the banker reveals anything. Which funds have been most active in this sector over the last 24 months? Which have raised capital recently and need to deploy? Who has the strategic rationale to pay a premium?

These questions have answers in Dakota's data. And walking into a process knowing the likely bidder field is a meaningful structural advantage in how you price, structure, and present your offer.

» 20K+ GPS   » ACTIVE BUYER ACTIVITY DATA

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03   ## Portfolio Strategy

ADD-ON ACQUISITION MAPPING TO ACCELERATE THE BUY-AND-BUILD

The buy-and-build thesis is one of the most reliable value creation strategies in PE — but execution is where it falls apart. Identifying credible add-on targets takes time that most deal teams don't have immediately post-close, when integration is consuming every available hour.

Dakota's portfolio company database lets deal teams do the add-on mapping before the deal closes. Once you know the platform company's sector, you can identify sponsor-backed targets of the right size, geography, and customer profile — and even see which ones are likely approaching a natural exit window based on hold period data.

Arriving at close with a short list of add-on targets already built changes the pace and ambition of the entire value creation plan. It turns buy-and-build from a concept into a pipeline.

» PORTFOLIO COMPANY GRAPH   » SECTOR OWNERSHIP DATA

04   ## Fund Development

LP TARGETING THAT REPLACES COLD OUTREACH WITH PRECISION

Most PE fundraising still runs on warm introductions, conference relationships, and whatever list of LPs the previous placement agent left behind. It's slow, coverage is uneven, and the best-fit LPs often get missed entirely because nobody on the team happened to know them.

Dakota's LP database restructures how deal teams approach fund development. Instead of starting with relationships and hoping they map to strategy, you start with the full universe of LPs — filterable by their stated strategy preferences, current GP relationships, vintage commitment history, and check size — and build a priority list of who should want your fund.

One of Dakota's most important differentiators here is data precision. Most competitors conflate LP types in ways that create real problems in fundraising — grouping wealth-management RIAs with investment-firm RIAs, for example, despite the fact that they operate under completely different decision-making structures. Dakota distinguishes them. That specificity matters enormously when you're trying to reach the right person at the right institution.

» FULL LP ALLOCATOR DATABASE

05   ## Performance Intelligence

FUND BENCHMARKING AGAINST TRUE PEER COMPS

Every PE fund claims top-quartile returns. The math on that claim is, famously, impossible — but it persists because private fund performance data is hard to get and even harder to compare. Without access to peer-level data, LPs can't push back effectively, and deal teams can't position their own performance credibly.

Dakota's private fund performance data gives deal teams an independent benchmarking capability. You can compare your fund's returns against true comps — same vintage year, same strategy, comparable fund size — rather than cherry-picked peer sets or aggregated industry averages.

This matters in three directions: in LP reporting, where credibility is everything; in co-invest diligence, where you need to evaluate a lead GP's actual track record; and in your own fundraising, where knowing how you compare to real peers sharpens the narrative significantly.

» PRIVATE FUND PERFORMANCE DATA

06   Capital Markets

FINANCING PARTNER INTELLIGENCE BEFORE THE PROCESS HEATS UP

The financing syndicate for a PE deal is assembled under pressure, usually late in a process when time is short and leverage is limited. Most deal teams rely on existing lender relationships and whatever their investment banker recommends — which means they frequently miss lenders who are more active in their specific sector or deal size and might offer better terms.

Dakota's GP and lender activity data lets deal teams map the financing landscape before the pressure arrives. Which credit providers have been most active in your sector at your deal size? Who has been lending on comparable capital structures in recent months? Which lenders have an established appetite for your type of deal and won't require extensive education during diligence?

Knowing the answers to these questions before you pick up the phone changes how much leverage you have in structuring the syndicate.

» GP & LENDER ACTIVITY INTELLIGENCE

07   Human Capital

SOURCING OPERATING EXECUTIVES BEFORE YOU NEED THEM

Value creation in PE is ultimately executed by people — and the most critical hire in most PE-backed companies is the first one the new ownership makes, whether that's a new CEO, a CFO to prepare for an eventual exit process, or a Division President to run a bolt-on integration.

The best operating executives for PE-backed companies are almost never found through executive search databases. They're found through networks — specifically, through people who have seen them perform in a PE context before. Dakota's portfolio company data creates a searchable version of that network.

By tracing which executives have run which PE-backed companies in which sectors — and which GPs have backed those companies — deal teams can identify proven operators with highly relevant experience who might otherwise take months to surface through traditional search channels.

Building the executive bench before you need it is one of the highest-leverage moves a deal team can make. Dakota makes that bench searchable.

» PORTFOLIO COMPANY GRAPH   » GP RELATIONSHIP DATA

One More Thing: All of This, Now Powered by AI

Dakota has always been a data platform. Now it's also a conversational analyst. The new AI-powered intelligence layer lets deal team members ask questions in plain language and get decision-ready answers — drawn from Dakota's proprietary database, not the public web.

Instead of navigating fields and filters, you ask:

> *"Which PE-backed healthcare services companies in the Southeast have been held 5+ years and might be approaching a sale process?"*

> *"What funds have been most active acquiring industrial distribution businesses between $50M–$200M EBITDA in the last two years?"*

> *"Which LPs have committed to PE funds in our strategy and vintage but haven't yet backed a fund in our geography?"*

28 years of proprietary intelligence. Now accessible in a single question.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Private equity is a long game. The deals you source today become the track record you raise on five years from now. The LP relationships you build in fund three become the anchor commitments in fund five. The operating executives you identify before close become the management teams that drive your returns.

Dakota Marketplace doesn't just help PE deal teams with individual tasks. It creates a cumulative intelligence advantage that compounds across every fund, every deal, and every relationship. The firms using it aren't smarter than their competitors — they're better informed, faster, and systematically less likely to be surprised.

In a market where the difference between winning and losing a deal is often measured in days, and the difference between a good fund and a great one is measured in basis points, that's a structural advantage worth having.