

Featured Member Spotlight January 2021



[Dyana Baurley](#)

Vice President, Business Development & Investor Relations
MiddleGround Capital
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Tell us about your role / firm: I recently joined MiddleGround as a Vice President on the Business Development team. We are a private equity firm making control investment in lower middle market B2B industrial and specialty distribution businesses. We take an operational approach and partner with management to support long term growth strategies.

What are you looking for?: We are constantly looking at industrial deals where we can deploy our operational expertise. Two thirds of our founding team started their careers' on the manufacturing floor of Toyota, so we love any opportunity to interact with founders and management teams.

What's on your mind?: We are currently spending a lot of time on how we can be effective in a virtual market. With conferences on hold and the changing deal landscape, how are you networking effectively, creating content, and avoiding "zoom fatigue"?



[Amara M. Briggs](#)

Senior Vice President, Middle Market Banker
BB&T Now Truist
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Tell us about your role / firm. I recently joined BB&T now Truist as a Senior Relationship Manager. We cover businesses with revenue size over \$75MM in the Delaware and Lehigh Valley regions. That coverage area encompasses the Greater Philadelphia Region, Southern New Jersey and Northern Delaware regions.

What drew me to BB&T now Truist is the culture of high touch service combined with a commitment to Middle Market and the greater community. We have served as a local coverage bank for over 270 years. Now, combined with Suntrust, we are the sixth largest bank in the country. We are fairly unknown here in the greater Philadelphia market, and I joined to help change that story.

What are you looking for? The combination with Suntrust widened our lens in terms on appetite. In terms of sponsor backed deals, we are interested in companies with a minimum of \$7.5MM in EBITDA and ideally, within manufacturing, logistics, beverage and Food and Ag. The latter three we have excelled at nationally and we leverage our industry experts.

What's on your mind? My goal is to tell the Truist story to potential clients, equity sponsors and referral sources to begin a potential relationship. We understand that changing banks does not happen overnight; however, if we do not get to know each other we will not be ready to help you if the need arises.



[Joan D. Hellmer](#)
Head of Corporate Development & Strategic Initiatives
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Tell us about your role / firm. I lead our mergers and acquisitions department here at AD. We are the largest contractor and industrial products wholesale buying group in North America. We provide independent distributors and manufacturers of construction and industrial products with support and resources that accelerate growth. Our 800-plus independent member owners span 13 divisions in the U.S., Mexico and Canada with annual sales exceeding \$45 billion.

What are you looking for? We are constantly looking for growth opportunities that would create value for our member owners. My primary responsibility is to do so via acquisitions of other buying groups or platforms with specialized capabilities or niche industrial coverage. That said, we are always open to entertain new angles, such as direct investments, JVs, or other strategic partnerships.

What's on your mind? I am currently spending a lot of time deciphering post-COVID trends in distribution, warehousing, construction, and the potential disruption of some of these supply-chains (i.e. Amazon). I am also very interested in how we can leverage big data analytics in our business in order to become smarter, predict better.



[Steve Higgins](#)
Managing Director
Delancey Street Partners
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Tell us about your role / firm. I am a Managing Director with Delancey Street Partners, an independent, industry-focused investment bank serving CEOs, entrepreneurs, shareholders, and boards of directors of high growth and middle market companies. I specialize in providing M&A advisory services, private capital raising, and other financial advisory services to founder/family-owned businesses and portfolio companies of private equity firms.

What are you looking for? We enjoy working with privately held business owners who have grown their companies to be niche market leaders within their respective industries. That said, we have industry specific experience and relationships in the following sectors: Business Services & Technology, Healthcare, and Industrial & Industrial Technology.

What's on your mind? My partners and I take a long-term approach to building relationships and welcome introductory conversations with business owners and management teams well in advance of any contemplated transaction.



[Hugh Nelson](#)
Director
Houlihan Lokey
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Tell us about your role / firm. We are a M&A and capital markets advisory firm to private fund managers and family-owned businesses looking for liquidity solutions or financing storied situations requiring creativity outside of traditional money center banks. My primary focus is on valuation advisory in transactions and NAV reporting.

What are you working on? PE fund-to-fund transfers are hot these days. PE sponsors are combining portfolio companies in the same or adjacent businesses—often held in different funds— to rationalize costs and strengthen the enterprise. Enhancing liquidity with capital from a different vehicle than the one holding the company is also more common due to the market uncertainty. We're advising many PE firms on these transfers.

What's on your mind? Many businesses are seeing tailwinds from COVID and there's uncertainty as to how long this will continue. This requires creativity and rigorous diligence to understand the drivers and potential impact to value which helps to better tell the story. How should business owners adapt to the new normal and prepare for the next curveball in 2021?